VOLUME I

# CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT COURSE

# *A Reason of the Hope*

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**Volume I**

# *A Reason of the Hope*

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# *DEDICATED*

To the memory of my parents,
whom I deeply loved and who taught me how to be a Christian.

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**BENNIE LANEHART COON**
*January 17, 1910 – October 28, 1985*

**BEULAH INEZ JETER COON**
*June 11, 1913 – April 30, 1987*

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## FOREWORD

A student and scholar's dream! Virtually every pertinent subject of the Book of God is outlined for you here in readable and teachable form. Pastor Crawford Coon has done a noble service to the body of Christ through his diligent research and excellent presentation.

As I read it, I caught myself wondering, Now, why wasn't this available when I was in the pastorate? Entire Bible lessons are here just waiting to be studied and explored! "The Godhead," "Enemies of the Soul," "Judgment," "Gifts of the Spirit," "Fruit of the Spirit," and on and on they go.

Don't let me hold you at the threshold of this work. It is scriptural. It is readable. It is understandable. It was born from the divine anointing of a true man of God. Hasten into the foyer and don't stop until you reach the back porch. When you complete it, you will be able to say, "Now I have a reasonable answer for the hope that is within me"—an answer to share with others.

T. F. Tenney, Superintendent
Louisiana District United Pentecostal Church

## A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Fellow Student:

Thanks and congratulations for purchasing your new *Christian Development Course, Volume 1: A Reason of the Hope.*

There is nothing we can do that is more important than studying God's Word. God's personal approval rests upon those who study His Word. Studying enables us to rightly divide the word of truth, establishes us as a workman, and makes us unashamed (II Timothy 2:15).

Much time, effort, and resources have gone into the preparation of these studies. All of this, however, is secondary to the need for scripturally sound teaching and preaching tools. You will find each of the lessons scripturally documented to the fullest degree. Glean as much as you can from each lesson, then add your own notes and thoughts, along with other verses of Scripture.

I encourage you to use the King James Version Bible, Webster's *Dictionary*, Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance*, Halley's *Bible Handbook*, and a Bible dictionary in your studies.

After you have thoroughly studied each lesson, you will be able to give others "a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). This hope anchors our souls (Hebrews 6:18-19), makes us unashamed (Romans 5:5), and motivates us to purify ourselves (I John 3:1-3).

Thank you for joining many others across the land who are taking advantage of the opportunity to study the Bible through the assistance of this book.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A work of this magnitude, of necessity, must involve many key people other than the author. Without the assistance of so many qualified helpers the task would have been impossible.

My deepest thanks and appreciation go to Debra McLendon, treasurer of our local congregation, who typed the original manuscript; Gladys Willis, John Parker, and Martha Harper, editors; Dan Gwaltney of ASAP, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri; Glenda Jenkins, manager; Tracy Fairbanks, typesetter; and Wanda Redmond, graphic artist at Mpress Printing, Alexandria, Louisiana. Special thanks goes to T. F. Tenney, superintendent of the Louisiana District of the United Pentecostal Church International, and to his wife, Thetus Tenney, for their support and encouragement. These people, along with others, have rendered invaluable assistance and expertise in their respective fields.

It was a joy to be able to work with Ms. Gladys Willis, my former high school English teacher. Her thirty-three years as a public schoolteacher more than qualified her for editorial work. John Parker presently serves in the local school system, as well as being a member of our local congregation. Martha Harper and her husband, Randy Harper, pastor in Jonesville, Louisiana.

To one and all: “THANKS!” Without you this Christian development course would not have been a reality.

**LESSON 1**

**NOTES:**

# WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

## ACTS 16:25-34

In each person's life there comes a time when he or she feels the need to take some type of action or undergo some type of experience in order to be saved. The above question is of paramount importance to each generation. We are correct in concluding that we must do something to be saved. The understanding that we are lost, without God, sinners, and doomed, is absolutely correct. Since all have sinned (Romans 3:23), we must become aware of our need of salvation from sin.

This question besieges each individual somewhere in life. I join you in the quest for salvation. I too want to be saved from sin and everlasting punishment. But the question remains: What must I do to be saved?

This lesson proposes to explore, fairly and scripturally, the proper expression of faith, i.e., the conversion experience that will initially save us from our sins (justification). Later we will study the continual life of faith as we remain in our salvation (sanctification).

Erring here spells eternal doom. Finding truth and obeying it will mean eternal joy in heaven in the end. We must have God's intervention and help to find and obtain salvation.

The word s*ave* has several connotations in the Bible, ranging from physical to spiritual deliverance. This lesson deals with salvation, or deliverance, from sin that qualifies us for heaven when we die or if the Lord returns for the church before we die.

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## DEFINITION

- **To save**—comes from the Greek word *sozo,* meaning to save, deliver, protect, heal, or preserve. Webster states that in theology it means to deliver a person or soul from sin and punishment or to redeem from spiritual death.

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## SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES ON BEING SAVED

Let us note the following Scripture references that denote action on our part in order to be saved:

1. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). Emphasis here is on the Word of God.

**NOTES:**

2. "Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved" (Proverbs 28:18). Emphasis here is on walking uprightly.

3. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50). Emphasis here is on faith.

4. "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). (See Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18.) Emphasis here is on the spoken word.

5. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). Emphasis here is on entering in the door, i.e., Jesus.

6. "Even baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21). Emphasis here is on water baptism.

7. "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Emphasis here is on our own personal responsibility in our salvation.

8. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22). Emphasis here is on looking to God for our salvation.

9. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). Emphasis here is on believing.

10. "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). Emphasis here is on grace and faith.

11. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Emphasis here is on calling on the name of the Lord.

12. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). Emphasis here is on mercy.

13. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Emphasis here is on enduring.

14. "For we are saved by hope" (Romans 8:24). Emphasis here is on hope.

15. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Emphasis here is on believing and being baptized in water.

16. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). Emphasis here is on confessing and believing.

---

These verses come from various places in the Bible. Some were spoken by prophets, apostles, Jesus, Solomon, and Paul. Who is right? Do these verses contradict each

**NOTES:**

other? Do we use just one verse, all sixteen verses together, or three or four verses together to obtain a formula for salvation?

We must use all sixteen verses *in context* along with the rest of the Word of God as it relates to action on our part. We are in gross error if we fail to lead a sinner into every aspect of salvation and the conversion experience. In other words, it is wrong to tell a sinner simply to believe, or to be baptized in water without Spirit baptism, or merely to have hope, or just to endure. We cannot isolate individual verses on salvation. We must embrace all the Scriptures regarding salvation.

There are other verses of Scripture that we must consider in relation to our soul's salvation. May we carefully and rightly divide the Word of Truth at this juncture (II Timothy 2:15). The following are progressive steps we must take in receiving this great salvation. Subsequent lessons will cover the details of each point.

---

## FAITH

From the Bible we learn that it is essential to believe God and His Word, or we will never take a positive step toward being saved. Faith is an absolute prerequisite in coming to God. Yet faith in the sense of mental belief or assent is insufficient to obtain salvation from sin. Let us study the following verses of Scripture that relate to salvation:

1. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

2. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

3. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

4. "In whom ye also trusted . . . [and] in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

5. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21).

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## REPENTANCE

Repentance is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. It is an action on our part in response to God's grace and because of our belief that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Our

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repentance demonstrates that we believe God and His Word, for God's Word plainly and simply teaches that we must repent:

1. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

2. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

3. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17).

4. "But now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

5. "But [God] is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

6. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

7. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

When we believe, we must repent. Repentance primarily means to have a change of mind and of heart. It consists of feeling sorry for our sins and asking God to forgive us of all our sins. Moreover, in repentance we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord, and in fulfilling this confession, we make an about-face and live according to His will.

---

## BAPTISM

Water baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ is an essential part of salvation. The Scripture says that it is the means by which the blood of Christ washes away sin (Acts 22:16). We receive remission of sins through baptism in His name (Acts 2:38).

1. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

2. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). We note that *name* here is singular. The name must be used in baptism, not simply the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

3. "And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

4. Study these verses on the subject of baptism: Luke 24:47; Acts 2:41; 8:12-16; 10:44-48; 19:1-7; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; I Peter 3:20-21.

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## HOLY GHOST

The Holy Ghost is the Comforter whom Jesus sends back into the hearts and souls of those who believe in Him. The church of God, which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28), began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). On that day many received the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave them the utterance. This experience is available today and is essential in our lives (Romans 8:9).

1. John the Baptist, speaking of Jesus, said, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). (See Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33.)

2. "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). (See John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-13.) Jesus was teaching about the Holy Ghost in these verses.

3. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

Experiencing the Holy Ghost is life's most exciting event. We are highly honored by God to have this great gift. Many verses of Scripture give us insight on this glorious experience. (See Joel 2:28-29; John 3:1-8; Acts 2:1-18; 8; 10; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11.)

Being saved from sin and ready for heaven is life's most important pursuit. Salvation is more valuable than wealth, fame, or even life itself. God's Word is the *only* source we have that tells us how to receive salvation.

God has chosen to place nuggets of truth here and there in His Word for us to seek out. The purpose of this lesson is to do just that.

Try as I may, I cannot accept the idea that if I simply believe in my heart and make a confession with my mouth that this alone constitutes salvation from sin. I have read too much about faith, repentance, baptism, and the Holy Ghost to accept this proposal.

Dare we accept fragments of truth on such a vital matter as salvation? Can we dwell on faith and ignore baptism? Shall we demand baptism and skip repentance? Can we be saved by accepting one part of the plan while rejecting the rest of the Bible?

When we search out truth in its entirety and obey it, we can be saved. We must not be deceived by any person or any denominational teaching! Instead, we must read the Bible and obey it; in doing so we will find salvation.

The Queen of Sheba traveled from the utmost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon (Luke 11:31), but One greater than Solomon is here—Jesus Christ. How much have we sought after Him and His plan of salvation?

In our search for salvation, we should never forget the following verse: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

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*Note: The instructor should study and explain the first sixteen verses in context, along with the rest of the lesson.*

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**LESSON 2**

**NOTES:**

# FAITH TOWARD GOD

## HEBREWS 6:1-10

Note: Faith toward God is one of the six "principles of the doctrine of Christ" (Hebrews 6:1); we will study the others in later lessons. All six are easily identifiable by notation and lesson topic.

---

Our last lesson identified faith, i.e., believing in and trusting Christ alone for salvation, as the first step toward salvation. Faith is an essential prerequisite in coming to God; without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Hebrews 11 is commonly called the faith chapter of the Bible. Each student should study this chapter thoroughly in conjunction with this lesson.

The writer of Hebrews admonished us to leave the basic principles of the doctrine of Christ, not laying again the foundation of these principles, but rather to go on to perfection, i.e., spiritual maturity. God is not telling us to forsake or abandon these principles. He is telling us to establish them in our lives as new converts and then to progress beyond them. We are to know them, understand them, have them in mind and heart, and then go on to maturity in Christ. Growth is involved in this process; we all should desire it.

Only two foundations exist for us to build our lives upon (Matthew 7:24-29). Until we are firmly established upon the foundation of the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20), we are not prepared to go on to greater things. The purpose of this lesson is to establish these principles in our lives and to motivate us to greater spiritual growth.

---

Since we have already established the essentiality of faith for salvation, we would do well to note its importance in our daily Christian walk.

We must clarify the meaning of the terms *the faith* and *faith* so we can understand Scripture in context.

*The faith* is the doctrine and teachings established by Christ, taught by the apostles, and delivered to the saints (Jude 3). When the Bible speaks of "contending for the faith," "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," and "some shall depart from the faith," this is not in the same sense as "faith toward God." Listed below are many of the verses relating to *the faith;* we should learn to differentiate between these two terms.

**NOTES:**

1. Jude 3, 17
2. II Corinthians 13:5
3. Romans 1:5; 14:1
4. Galatians 1:23
5. I Corinthians 16:13
6. Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5
7. Ephesians 4:5
8. Philippians 1:27
9. I Timothy 1:2; 3:9; 4:1; 5:8; 6:10
10. Colossians 1:23; 2:7
11. II Timothy 3:8
12. Titus 1:13; 3:15

A good thing to remember in helping to differentiate these two terms is that one can have *faith* and not be in *the faith*, but one cannot be in *the faith* without having *faith toward God*.

---

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). This is the meaning of *faith toward God* as found in Hebrews 6:1. *Faith* is the translation of a Greek word meaning persuasion, credence, conviction of the truthfulness of God, assurance, and believing.

---

## HOW DO WE OBTAIN FAITH?

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). As we hear the Word, we must mix it with faith for it to profit us (Hebrews 4:2).

Our journey toward God and salvation really begins when we hear the Word of God and believe it. At this juncture we give mental and verbal assent to God and His Word. Having faith or believing must exist in our lives through every step the Bible leads us. Although we may not be able to explain the Bible or have a full understanding of it, yet we believe it. That is faith toward God.

When we believe, we are eligible to receive anything and everything God's Word promises us. Mentally believing in or on Jesus Christ and His Word does not constitute salvation within itself. Rather, our faith becomes the propelling force that causes us to act on what we believe (John 1:11-13).

Both Satan and demons believe (James 2:19), but their belief does not save them. It takes more than this type of believing to be saved, yet we can never be saved without believing. Faith is the first step, the beginning ingredient, and a necessary part of salvation. Every step toward God must be prefaced by faith.

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We can acquire great things from God through faith. The most important is salvation from sin. Some additional benefits accompany salvation, but they are constantly dependent on faith to keep them alive in our heart and soul.

---

## SALVATION

Unbelief will stop us from receiving salvation for our souls. We must not allow the devil to confuse our minds by telling us that we *doubt* when the problem is a lack of *understanding* of God's Word. There is a vast difference between the two. Unbelievers have their part in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). These are the ones who refused to accept God's Word and to believe and obey it. Let us obey Jesus' call: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The following verses demonstrate the necessity of faith for salvation:

1. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is" (Hebrews 11:6).

2. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

3. "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).

4. "To them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

5. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth . . . in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

6. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25).

7. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12).

8. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

9. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2).

10. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3:2).

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## HEALING

Healing, along with the seven other topics mentioned here, are really addenda to the subject of salvation. Since each of these has *faith* as its activator, we mention them here.

1. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick" (James 5:15).

2. To the woman with the issue of blood, Jesus said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole" (Matthew 9:22).

3. "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong" (Acts 3:16).

4. "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29).

---

## PLEASING GOD

Every born-again Christian is filled with a basic desire to please the One who saved him from sin. This desire will bring discipline to our lives, with the resulting blessings of God upon us. Again, this can only be accomplished by faith toward God.

1. "But without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6).

2. Enoch "had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5).

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## VICTORY

Success in living for God, along with the conquest of besetting sins, can only come through faith. To avoid defeat in our Christian walk, we must keep our faith strong.

1. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

2. We should study the things that constitute the world, with the view of being victorious over them. (See I John 2:15-17.)

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## UNDERSTANDING

Though the things of God are inexplicable by us, there is an abiding comprehension of the things of God. We accept them by faith; therefore, many things baffling to theolo-

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gians are readily understood by the believer. How great is the peace afforded to believers!

1. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Hebrews 11:3).

2. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20) (Study Genesis 1-2 in conjunction with this verse.)

---

## SANCTIFICATION

We acquire initial sanctification when we are born again. Through faith, we retain and grow in this state of purification, holiness, and consecration. Other factors are involved, but faith remains the foundation upon which they stand.

1. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

2. "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9).

---

## JUSTIFICATION

Justification is another benefit of being born again. Justification means being declared just, innocent, and righteous in the eyes of God. We receive and stand in this blessed state through faith in God.

1. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

2. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16).

3. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28).

4. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).

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## DIRECTION

The path of the Christian is often obscure; his or her only sense of direction is found through faith in God and His Word. Nothing more is needed; we just need to be aware of the type of circumstances under which we must travel.

1. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7).

2. "Walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Romans 4:12).

---

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

We initially acquire righteousness, which is closely connected to sanctification and justification, by the new birth experience (John 3:1-8). It is then maintained in the believer's life through faith in God and obedience to His Word. "Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" in God's eyes (Isaiah 64:6). Our goal is to have the righteousness of God ruling in our lives.

1. "The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith" (Romans 9:30).

2. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise . . ." (Romans 10:6). (See Romans 10:1-6.)

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## FACTS OF FAITH

Below are some pertinent facts concerning faith that we would do well to commit to memory.

1. Faith works by love (Galatians 5:6).

2. All people do not have faith (II Thessalonians 3:2).

3. Faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26).

4. Without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).

5. Only charity is greater than faith (I Corinthians 13:13).

6. Faith is a weightier matter than tithing (Matthew 23:23).

7. The church is the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

**NOTES:**

8. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

9. The shield of faith is part of the Christian's armor (Ephesians 6:16).

10. Faith is one of the nine spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:9).

11. Faith is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

12. We are to hold to faith lest we make shipwreck of our lives (I Timothy 1:18-20).

13. There is a law (principle) of faith (Romans 3:27).

14. We are to add to our faith seven virtues (II Peter 1:5-10).

Faith toward God is a virtually inexhaustible subject. I encourage you, with Bible and concordance in hand, to explore the depths of faith. The first goal of this lesson is to establish faith in your heart for salvation. The second goal is to increase your faith, causing you to build upon it so that you will never fall (II Peter 1:10).

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**LESSON 3**

**NOTES:**

# REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

## HEBREWS 6:1-10

Note: Repentance from dead works is the second of the six *principles of the doctrine of Christ* (Hebrews 6:1-2); we will study the others in later lessons.

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Since we are to be ready to give every person "a reason of the hope that is in [us]" (I Peter 3:15), we need to be able to answer "why" we believe in and teach repentance. We will present several verses of Scripture; I recommend that you familiarize yourself with each of them.

Repentance is actually the first step *of action* that we take toward salvation from sin. Mental belief or faith precedes repentance; it is an inward work that produces or causes us to repent. Repentance is an action-filled step known to God, to us, and to others—a private and often public step that brings about positive results in our lives. Because we have a sinful nature and have committed sinful acts, it is essential that we repent and turn to God.

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## DEFINITION OF REPENTANCE

*Webster's Dictionary* states that repentance means "to feel sorry or self-reproachful for what one has or hasn't done; to feel so contrite over one's sins as to change, or decide to change one's ways."

The Bible uses two words for repentance—study them closely.

1. **Metamellomai**—is a Greek word meaning to regret, to care afterwards, to be sorry for.

2. **Metanaeo**—is a Greek word meaning to think differently, to change one's mind, purpose, or opinion.

II Corinthians 7:8-10 uses both terms in the original Greek. There, Paul referred to a letter he had written to the Corinthians. He told them that he did not have a change of mind about the letter, although he regretted that he had had to write it.

A. "I do not repent" (verse 8) means he had not changed his mind (see definition 2).

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B. "Though I did repent" (verse 8) means he did feel regret or sorrow (see definition 1).

C. "Repentance to salvation" (verse 10) means a change of mind (see definition 2).

D. "Not to be repented of" (verse 10) means that we should never feel sorry that we have repented unto salvation (see definition 1).

"The sorrow of the world worketh death," while "godly sorrow worketh repentance" (II Corinthians 7:10), i.e., it causes us to change our mind and direction. This type of sorrow or repentance is "not to be repented of," i.e., we are not to regret or feel sorry about changing our ways.

Merely feeling sorry for or regretting something we have done wrong is not "repentance from dead works." We must have more than a feeling of sorrow in order to be saved. It must be a godly sorrow so deeply felt that it produces a change of mind, attitude, and direction in us. Many feel sorrow and regret when they are caught or exposed. This is not repentance, because nothing changes. Repentance produces change.

Judas repented (Matthew 27:3), but his repentance was only regret, not a change of mind. God repented (Genesis 6:6), meaning, in this context, that He was grieved that He made humans, but there was no change of mind. Parents may punish their child and feel sorry that they had to do so, but have no change of mind or opinion on the matter.

When we study every verse of Scripture about repentance in its context, or in relation to its background, then we will understand its meaning.

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## DEFINITION OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

Repentance from dead works means turning from, repenting of, and changing our minds about the works or actions that produce spiritual death, or separation from God, in our lives.

1. Sin entered the world by one man and death by sin—both physical and spiritual death (Romans 5:12-21).

2. Sin when it is finished brings forth death (James 1:15).

3. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

4. We who were dead in trespasses and sins God has quickened, i.e., made alive (Ephesians 2:1).

5. God has quickened us who were dead in sin (Colossians 2:13).

**NOTES:**

6. The blood of Christ purges our consciences from dead works (Hebrews 9:14).

7. Works of the flesh will produce spiritual death (Galatians 5:16-21).

Sin, as we can see, works not only physical death in our lives but spiritual death as well. Salvation brings life to the soul now and eternally if we continue in salvation. We must repent of these dead works, or death-producing works, if we are to find life. Let us study the following examples.

- **Jacob—**In his return to Bethel ("House of God"), he commanded the members of his household to do three things (Genesis 35:1-3):

  1. "Put away the strange gods from among you." This is a type of removing anything from our lives that separates us from God. (See Judges 10:15-16.)

  2. "Be clean." This is a type of cleansing ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. (See II Corinthians 7:1.) We can accomplish this by heeding the Word of God. (See Psalm 119:9; Isaiah 1:16; John 15:3.)

  3. "Change your garments." This is a type of laying aside the garments of sin and being clothed with salvation. (See Job 29:14; Isaiah 61:10; I Peter 5:5; Revelation 3:18.)

- **Nineveh—**This vast city of Assyria repented at the preaching of Jonah the prophet. (See Jonah 3:5-10; Matthew 12:41.) Notice what the people did:

  1. They fasted. Both humans and beasts did without food for three days, thereby expressing their genuine contrition.

  2. They turned from their evil way. This is the essence of true repentance.

  3. They turned from the violence that was in their hands. As a result, God saw their repentant spirit and spared them.

- **Nebuchadnezzar—**Daniel explained true repentance to this king (Daniel 4:27):

  1. "Break off thy sins by righteousness."

  2. "And [break off] thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor."

  3. "If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

- **Isaiah—**One of Israel's greatest prophets gave insight into repentance (Isaiah 55:6-7):

  1. Seek the Lord and call on him.

**NOTES:**

2. Let the wicked forsake his way.

3. Let the unrighteous forsake his thoughts.

4. Let him return to the Lord.

The result of this type of repentance is that "God . . . will abundantly pardon."

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## WORKS WORTHY OF REPENTANCE

As the Scriptures reveal, there are some things a person will do that demonstrate true repentance. One manifest token of repentance is restitution. This could entail (but is not limited to) restoring stolen things to the proper owner, paying for damages caused to others, and mending damaged relationships through a confession of wrongdoing.

In the following verses *meet* means suitable, proper, fitting, appropriate, worthy, and becoming.

1. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8).

2. "Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20).

3. "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8). The word *worthy* in this verse means the same as *meet* in Matthew 3:8.

Paul enumerated many wonderful things that will happen to a person who turns to God for salvation. (See Acts 26:18.)

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## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES ON REPENTANCE

Memorizing the following verses of Scripture will help you to witness to others about repentance. Add other helpful verses to your notes.

1. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

2. "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

3. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4).

4. "But now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

5. "God peradventure will give them repentance" (II Timothy 2:25).

**NOTES:**

6. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).
7. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance" (II Corinthians 7:10).
8. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent . . ." (Acts 2:38).
9. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17).
10. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:47).
11. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted" (Acts 3:19).
12. "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

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## THE RESULTS OF REPENTANCE

God's Word is clear about repentance. When we truly repent, we get results: *God forgives us*!

1. "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).
2. "And you . . . hath he quickened . . . having forgiven you of all trespasses" (Colossians 2:13).
3. "Him hath God exalted . . . for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).
4. "In whom we have . . . the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14).

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## SEVEN WORKS OF REPENTANCE

Along with aspects of repentance, the following seven things happen when we truly repent (II Corinthians 7:9-11). We offer only brief comments here; study them further.

1. **Carefulness**—a watchfulness lest we sin.
2. **Clearing**—freeing ourselves of guilt.
3. **Indignation**—a hatred of sin.
4. **Fear**—of God and sin's results.

**NOTES:**

5. **Vehement Desire**—to be righteous and to obey God's Word.

6. **Zeal**—in working for God and His cause.

7. **Revenge**—in the sense of acknowledging justice and the punishment of sin.

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## PARABLES

Take time to read the four parables mentioned here. They teach great lessons on repentance from four different perspectives, showing that it involves a change of mind, heart, and direction.

1. Parable of two sons (Matthew 21:28-32).

2. Parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7).

3. Parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10).

4. Parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

Repentance is the first positive step toward God on a sinner's part. As good and necessary as repentance is, however, salvation is not complete at repentance. We must go on to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ and to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

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## REPENTANCE FOR THE SAVED

After we are born again there will be times of failure, mistakes, and sin. We must deal with sin and wrongdoing in our lives just as we did before salvation—by repentance. We are to be overcomers, to live free from sin, and to live above sin. In reality, we often come short of our goal. Nevertheless, we are not to continue in sin or commit sins over and over. The following passages of Scripture instruct us on how to handle the failures caused by the weakness of our flesh.

1. When Job prayed for his friends, God accepted his prayer for them and turned the captivity of Job, i.e., He made him prosperous again (Job 42:1-10).

2. There are ways to be reconciled to our brother (Matthew 5:23-34).

3. We can learn how to handle trespasses against us (Matthew 18:15-17).

4. When we confess our sins, God forgives and cleanses us (I John 1:7-9).

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5. Confessing and forsaking sin bring mercy (Proverbs 28:13).

6. If we sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One (I John 2:1-2).

7. In prayer we are to ask for forgiveness (Matthew 6:5-15).

God still rules in the heavens and will forgive those who repent, whether they are saints or sinners.

Nothing can supersede or replace repentance in our lives. It is God's command, our duty, and our privilege. Joy comes to the heart of the repentant sinner, to the life of observers, and to the angels of heaven (Luke 15:7).

Whatever may happen to us in life, we must always keep a repentant and forgiving spirit alive in our hearts.

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**LESSON 4**

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# THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

## HEBREWS 6:1-2

In this chapter we continue our study of the *principles of the doctrines of Christ*. In this lesson, we will examine the word *baptism* in the plural—*baptisms*. Primarily, we will turn our attention to the third step in our salvation experience, which is water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). We will also examine the other baptisms that the Bible speaks about.

Further study and research is in order on each of these topics. By all means, establish the truth of water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ in your mind as an essential step in receiving salvation. Ignoring or rejecting this step would mean our sins would not be remitted.

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## BAPTISMS IN THE SCRIPTURE

The Word of God mentions several baptisms. We will briefly discuss each of them but will emphasize water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

1. **Baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea**—I Corinthians 10:1-2 describes two aspects of the Israelites' escape from Egyptian bondage: God led them by a pillar of cloud, and they passed through the Red Sea on dry ground. (See Exodus 14:1-31.) I Corinthians 10:1-2 contains not only a reference to a real historical experience that the Israelites had, but it also reveals that this experience is a beautiful type of Spirit and water baptism. We note that all Israel was under the cloud and passed through the sea. As the Israelites passed through the Red Sea with a wall of water on each side of them (Exodus 14:29), the pillar of cloud was above them. This type shows that both Spirit and water baptism are essential to the new birth experience that Jesus taught (John 3:1-8). Israel, "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38), is a great type of God's church today.

2. **Baptism of John**—Each Gospel mentions the baptism administered by John the Baptist. (See Matthew 3:1-11; Mark 1:1-10; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:19-33.) *Baptist* in this reference means *baptizer*. John's baptism was one of repentance for the remission of sin. John was a forerunner, announcing the coming of Christ; his message was for a limited time, and then his disciples were to follow Christ. John baptized Jesus Christ in the Jordan River "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). God gave John a revelation at the time of Jesus' baptism. The Spirit descended as a dove upon Jesus, identifying Him as the one who would baptize with the Spirit (John 1:33).

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3. **Baptism for the dead**—To better understand this part of our study, read I Corinthians 15:1-58. This chapter covers the resurrection of the dead that some were saying had already past (II Timothy 2:18). Along with this false teaching, another unbiblical practice arose: baptizing the living on behalf of the dead in order for them to be resurrected in the first resurrection. Paul confronted this teaching with two questions in I Corinthians 15:29: (1) "What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" (2) "Why are they then baptized for the dead?" If this doctrine were true then the destiny of the lost dead would be in the hands of the living. If the living would fail in their responsibility, the dead would lose their chance of being saved.

   The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, better known as the Mormon Church, practices baptism for the dead. Marcion and his followers originally practiced it during the middle of the second century A.D. "The Marcionites practiced sometimes vicarious baptism for the dead."[1] Thus, this is not a new idea, but existed from the days of Paul until now. Neither logic nor Scripture will support this teaching.

4. **Baptism of suffering**—(See Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50.) In these passages, Jesus referred to the cup He was to drink and to the baptism He was to be baptized with, meaning the suffering He was to undergo. He had already been baptized in water by John the Baptist at about the age of thirty (Luke 3:23). Jesus used a metaphor when calling his future suffering a "cup" and a "baptism."

   Because of our sins, the cup was bitter to drink, and the baptism difficult to submit to. From Gethsemane to Calvary, Christ felt the overwhelming flood of suffering and rejection for us to have this wonderful salvation.

5. **Baptism of the Holy Ghost**—When the writer of Hebrews spoke of "the doctrine of baptisms" (Hebrews 6:2), he was referring specifically (1) to water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and (2) to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. These are two essential elements, along with repentance, that complete the new birth (John 3:1-8). Before we can go on to perfection, we must first receive these baptisms. We will only briefly mention the baptism of the Spirit here, since it is covered in another lesson.

   When we receive the Holy Ghost, it is an overwhelming immersion in the Spirit. Scripturally, it is a baptism of the Spirit or a birth of the Spirit. (See Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:1-5.)

   Ephesians 4:1-5 refers to the supernatural things of God, along with His deity. Verse 4 mentions "one body," which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). We are baptized into that one body by the one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). From this we conclude that the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5 refers to being "baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:5). We note that Ephesians 4:6 states that there is "one God . . . who is above all, and through all, and in you all." God can only be

**NOTES:**

in us by His Spirit. It does not appear that this verse is speaking of one baptism comprised of both Spirit and water baptism, for these are definite and separate works. Nevertheless, it does take *both* water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Holy Ghost to produce the born-again experience of John 3:1-8. One of these alone is not the experience of salvation; it takes both.

6. **Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ**—We will place emphasis on this aspect of the doctrine of baptism, studying the information on water baptism in Jesus' name from the Scripture. We will also study baptism from a historical perspective.

A. **BAPTISM IS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS**

1. Jesus declared that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

2. This command was carried out at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Simon Peter, the man with the keys to the kingdom of God (Matthew 16:18-19), declared: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

B. **BAPTISM IS FOR THE WASHING AWAY OF SINS**

1. Ananias commanded Paul, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

2. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11).

C. **BAPTISM IS BIRTH OF THE WATER**

1. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

2. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

D. **BAPTISM IS A WASHING AND CLEANSING OF THE CONSCIENCE**

1. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21).

2. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

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E. **BAPTISM IS A BURIAL**

1. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

2. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

F. **BAPTISM IS TAKING ON THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST**

1. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

2. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13:14).

3. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Timothy 2:19).

4. "That worthy name by the which ye are called" (James 2:7).

The preceding passages refer to the work that takes place in our lives when we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

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## WHAT NAME SHOULD BE CALLED OVER US IN BAPTISM?

I have chosen to explain two passages from the Scripture together—Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38—since they *apparently* contradict each other. Matthew 28:19 says to baptize in the *name* of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38, however, tells us to be baptized in the *name* of Jesus Christ. Careful observation of both verses will reveal that "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost" are not actually names. These are descriptive titles and roles of the one God. When we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, we fulfill Matthew 28:19. The only correct baptismal formula is found in the Word of God. How were converts baptized in the New Testament? Examples abound in God's Word; let us follow these same examples, and then we, too, will be right.

1. Jesus told His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins in His *name*, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

2. The fulfillment of Jesus' command in Luke 24:47 is found in Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

**NOTES:**

3. Three thousand souls received the Word and were baptized (Acts 2:41). How? As Peter had just told them—in the name of Jesus Christ.

4. Philip baptized the new converts at Samaria in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:12-16).

5. Peter commanded Cornelius and his household and friends who had just received the Holy Ghost to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:44-48).

6. Paul instructed twelve men from Ephesus, who had already been baptized by John the Baptist, to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:1-7).

New Testament believers were always baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. There is not one place or any indication that anyone was ever baptized in the New Testament with the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost called over them. The early church taught that (1) Jesus was both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), (2) that there is salvation in none other than Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12), and (3) that Jesus has all power in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). "Jesus," a name of such power and glory, must be called over us at baptism.

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## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WATER BAPTISM

The question is often asked: "Why do so many baptize their converts in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?" Without criticizing those who do, let me explain why they do. As the church grew older after its founding (Acts 2:1-42), not only did false teachers arise from within the church, but also many sincere individuals simply misunderstood the teachings of the Scripture. From this setting many erroneous ideas developed.

This process reached its apex in the fourth century A.D. The Council of Nicaea convened in A.D. 325, condemned Arianism, and adopted the teaching of Athanasius, which was an early form of trinitarianism and was at that time accepted as orthodox. The trinitarian baptismal formula had gradually gained acceptance in conjunction with the development and acceptance of the doctrine of the trinity. The Council of Nicaea itself is an example of an early official step in this direction. Following this council, the Roman Catholic Church gradually came into prominence and then dominated western Christendom for roughly the next twelve hundred years. In A.D. 1517, Martin Luther began what became known as the Protestant Reformation. The Lutherans and other religious groups that arose during this time retained the trinitarian baptismal formula. Using Matthew 28:19 as a proof text, they maintained that God is a trinity, and they used this verse as the baptismal formula. Though these groups may be sincere, these doctrines are not consistent with Bible practice and teaching.

The Bible and history demonstrate that all New Testament believers were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. For the sake of space, I will give only one historian's viewpoint,

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although many others are available. I recommend that you research baptism historically; it is an interesting and revealing topic. The following quotations are from Robert M. Grant, a distinguished historian and professor of New Testament and early Christianity at the University of Chicago:

- "At first, baptisms took place in the name of the Lord Jesus, later in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[2]
- "Christian baptism as we meet it in Paul, in the book of Acts, is in the name of Jesus."[3]
- "To be baptized in or into the name of Jesus means turning away from other names."[4]
- "Do the baptismal formulas and creeds set forth a doctrine of the Trinity? Those we have thus far described do not."[5]

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## HOW IMPORTANT IS WATER BAPTISM?

From the scriptural definition of baptism, anyone who refuses the cleansing of the blood of Jesus that occurs at baptism in the name of Jesus Christ does not receive remission of sins or salvation from sin. The Scripture clearly declares, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), and "Baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21). Baptism is a vital and important part of God's plan of salvation in the New Testament church.

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## ENDNOTES

[1]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1910) 2:487.

[2]Robert M. Grant, *Gods and the One God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 53.

[3]Ibid., 150.

[4]Ibid., 164.

[5]Ibid., 167.

**LESSON 5**

**NOTES:**

# THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

## ACTS 2:1-4, 38; ROMANS 8:9-15

We again turn our attention to the steps that we must take to enter the kingdom of God. According to the Word of God, the first is *faith,* the second *repentance,* the third *water baptism* in the name of Jesus Christ, and the fourth and final step is *receiving the Holy Ghost*. After being born again, we must then continue in the apostles' doctrine, living a holy and godly life.

Speaking with other tongues is the initial sign God that gives us when we receive the Holy Ghost. Our next study will focus specifically on speaking in tongues, so this lesson will only mention it briefly.

Much of the Christian world today views the Holy Ghost as an optional blessing that is not essential to salvation. How important is the Holy Ghost in our lives according to the Scriptures? From the Bible it is evident that the Holy Ghost is essential in our lives for us to be saved from sin. Let us examine what God has to say on the subject. Then we can give others a reason of the hope that is in us concerning the Holy Ghost.

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## THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF THE HOLY GHOST

Four great prophets, one of them being the Holy Ghost baptizer, told us that we can and will receive the Holy Ghost. Peter said "all that are afar off" (Acts 2:39) are candidates for the Holy Ghost. Prophetic Scripture has been fulfilled over and over again since the Day of Pentecost c. A.D. 33. Worldwide, men and women are receiving the Holy Ghost as evidenced by speaking with other tongues.

- **Isaiah**—foretold that God would use stammering lips and another tongue (Isaiah 28:9-12). Paul referred to this prophecy in one of his epistles. (See I Corinthians 14:21.) Isaiah described the joy of this experience as like drawing water from the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:1-6).

- **Joel**—foretold the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28-29). Peter informed us that the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16-18).

- **John the Baptist**—All four gospel writers recorded John's prophecy of Christ baptizing with the Holy Ghost and fire (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Jesus himself declared that John the Baptist was a prophet (Luke 7:24-30).

- **Jesus Christ**—"Prophet of all prophets" is a proper and fitting title for our Lord. In the truest sense of the word, Jesus was a prophet (Luke 24:19; Acts

**NOTES:**

3:22-23). He prophesied of many things such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the rising of false christs, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

1. He described the Holy Ghost as rivers of living water (John 7:37-39). The Holy Ghost is the living water of John 4:10-14.

2. When Jesus spoke of being born of the Spirit, He meant being baptized with the Holy Ghost. (See John 3:1-8.)

3. He foretold of the coming Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13).

4. He promised His followers right before His ascension to heaven that they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost a few days from then (Acts 1:5). Jesus fulfilled his promise on the Day of Pentecost. (See Acts 2:1-4.)

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## WHAT IS THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST?

Many man-made terms, which are not consistent with the Bible, are used to describe the Holy Spirit. To answer the above question properly, let us go to the Bible for a scriptural definition of the Holy Ghost. The following terms describe the gift of the Holy Ghost in the life of the believer.

1. **Spirit of Christ—**Also called the Spirit of God because Jesus is God (Romans 8:9-11). Jesus spoke of being *with us* and of being *in us*; the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God coming into our lives. (See Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:16-18.)

2. **A Baptism**—The baptism of the Holy Ghost is an inundating, overwhelming immersion in the Spirit. God's Spirit baptizes us into one body (I Corinthians 12:13). Being baptized with the Holy Ghost is the "one baptism" of which Paul spoke (Ephesians 4:5).

3. **A Birth**—Two distinct elements constitute the born-again experience, namely, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost baptism (John 3:1-8). Jesus equated the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the birth of the Spirit.

4. **A Seal**—God gives us the Holy Ghost to seal us for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). "Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). (See II Corinthians 1:22.)

5. **The Earnest of our Inheritance**—As great as this experience is, it is only a down payment on, or part of, what we will receive in the end, if we are faithful (II Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14). Paul referred to this experience as "the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Romans 8:23).

**NOTES:**

6. **Rest**—Jesus invited people to come to Him and find rest for their souls (Isaiah 28:12; Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:1-11). In Christ we have ceased from our labors and have entered into the rest (sabbath) of the Holy Ghost. Every day is a holy day of rest, peace, and joy in Him.

7. **Spirit of Adoption**—Through the Holy Ghost, we have been adopted as children of God, crying out "Abba," which means "daddy" or "father" (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5).

8. **Living Water**—Those who have drunk of the spiritual drink and of the spiritual Rock (I Corinthians 10:1-4) know the depth of this term. Living water sounds refreshing and revitalizing. Jesus said the Holy Ghost is like that (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39).

9. **Power from on High**—We are weak creatures, needing power outside the human realm. Through the Holy Ghost, God has provided this needed power—power to be witnesses (Acts 1:8) and to live as God directs us in His Word. We need to be endued with power from on high. (See Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4.) This power comes from the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (I Peter 1:12).

10. **The Comforter**—Jesus called the Holy Ghost the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, a guide, a testifier, and a reprover (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13).

## WHO CAN RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST?

God has made conditional promises to those who want the Holy Ghost. When these Bible conditions are met, *anyone* can receive the Holy Ghost. God is no respecter of persons but will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13). Let us observe what the Bible has to say on the subject.

1. God's promise of the Holy Ghost is to all flesh—sons, daughters, servants, and handmaidens (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:16-17).

2. John the Baptist did not exclude anyone in his preaching about the Holy Ghost baptism (Matthew 3:11).

3. Peter declared that the Holy Ghost is for the Jews and for Gentiles (Acts 2:38-39).

4. God gives the Holy Ghost to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32).

5. Those at Samaria and the Ethiopian received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:1-40).

6. Cornelius and those in his home received the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:44-48).

**NOTES:**

7. Persons from every kindred, tongue, and nation can receive the Holy Ghost (Revelation 5:9).

Angels desire to look into this great salvation, and prophets have searched and inquired diligently into it (I Peter 1:10-12), but we can have it!

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## EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST

On the Day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church, about 120 believers spoke with other tongues as they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-4). God's Word is precise in giving us example after example of this phenomenal sign of speaking in tongues as evidence that one has received the Holy Ghost. Millions have experienced this glorious, ecstatic utterance when they received this precious gift.

Paul spoke with tongues more than anyone in the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 14:18). No doubt, the first occasion was when he received the Holy Ghost. (See Acts 9:17-18.) There are numerous scriptural statements about speaking in tongues.

1. Isaiah prophesied of God speaking through another tongue to his people (Isaiah 28:9-12).

2. When the New Testament church began, the believers spoke in other tongues (Acts 2:1-4).

3. Though not explicitly stated, the evidence reveals that the Samaritans spoke in tongues (Acts 8:1-25).

4. Cornelius's household, which was Gentile, spoke in tongues (Acts 10:44-48).

5. Disciples of John the Baptist were rebaptized and spoke in tongues (Acts 19:1-6).

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## SYNONYMOUS TERMS FOR THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

There are many different views today regarding when and how we receive the Holy Ghost. We must base our beliefs and experience on the Scriptures, not on human opinion. There are at least nine ways in which the Bible describes receiving the Holy Ghost. None of these descriptions say that there are degrees or stages in receiving the Holy Ghost. They do not describe different experiences; they are different expressions by different people that describe the same experience. We may use each of these descriptions today when we speak of receiving the Holy Ghost.

**NOTES:**

1. **Baptized with the Holy Ghost**—Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5

2. **Filled with the Holy Ghost**—Acts 2:1-4; 9:17

3. **Gift of the Holy Ghost**—Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Romans 5:5; 6:23

4. **Received the Holy Ghost**—John 7:37-39; Acts 8:15-19; 10:47; 19:2

5. **Holy Ghost came upon**—Acts 1:8; 19:6

6. **Spirit poured out**—Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17; 10:45

7. **Holy Ghost sent down from heaven**—I Peter 1:12; compare with Acts 2:2 and the "sound from heaven."

8. **Holy Ghost fell**—Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15

9. **Holy Ghost shed on us**—Acts 2:33; Romans 5:5; Titus 3:5-6

In the account of Cornelius and his household being filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:44-48), four of these terms are used in five verses: fell, poured out, gift, and received. Did Cornelius receive four kinds, degrees, stages, or types of the Holy Ghost? No. It was one experience described in four different ways.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY GHOST

God's Spirit is very important in our lives, and our relationship with Him is a sacred thing. Indeed, Jesus warned us not to blaspheme the Holy Ghost. Forgiveness can never be obtained for this sin (Mark 3:28-30). Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the *only* unpardonable sin. All other sins can be forgiven.

The Scripture stresses the importance and essentiality of receiving the Holy Ghost. Let us give special attention to the following verses:

1. Without the Holy Ghost, we will not be in the catching away of the church (Romans 8:11; I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

2. Without the Spirit of Christ, we are none of His (Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:3; II Timothy 2:19).

3. We cannot call Jesus "Lord" except by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:3).

Once a person has exercised faith in Christ through repentance, water baptism, and the reception of Holy Ghost, his justification is complete and the process of his sanctification and ultimate glorification has begun. Though this experience may sound like a big

**NOTES:**

order, and it is, anyone can receive it. It is our responsibility to believe and repent, to allow a minister to baptize us, and then to believe God to baptize us with the Holy Ghost. This is Bible salvation.

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## SALVATION

The New Testament describes the glorious experience of salvation with several synonymous terms; a few of them are below. These terms cover the complete experience of being born again.

1. **Washing**—Cleansing comes through the blood, water, and Spirit, as a result of our faith in Christ and obedience to the Word of God (John 13:10; I Corinthians 6:11; I Peter 1:22; Revelation 1:7).

2. **Resurrection**—The Bible compares being saved from sin to being made alive and being resurrected (Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 2:13; Romans 6:1-11).

3. **Birth**—Newborn babies come into the world, behold its beauty for the first time, and then grow up to enjoy all the exciting things that life brings. When people are born into the family of God, they are nourished by the Word and grow up to be useful workers for God's cause (John 1:13; 3:l-8; Galatians 4:29; I Peter 1:23; I John 2:29).

4. **Circumcision**—Spiritual circumcision of the heart (Jeremiah 4:4) occurs today when we obey Acts 2:38. Together, water baptism and Spirit baptism fully circumcise the heart (Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 3:29; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:10-13).

5. **Translation**—Spiritually we are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Romans 6:4-5; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 1:13).

6. **Being in the kingdom of God**—God's kingdom is a spiritual entity that we become part of by being born again (Matthew 16:19; Mark 12:34; Luke 12:31-32; John 3:1-8; Acts 8:12; Romans 14:17).

7. **Being saved**—Salvation is accomplished in our lives by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5; See Acts 2:1-4), which comes through obeying the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

8. **Being a new creature**—"Creature" in this instance means "creation." Only in and through Christ can we become new creations (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15).

The Bible describes Stephen, the first martyr of the church, as being *full* of the Holy Ghost (Acts 6:3, 8). What a testimony! May it become ours.

**LESSON 6**

**NOTES:**

# SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

## ACTS 2:1-18

This lesson examines a subject that many people do not understand. Through study we will be able to give others a reason why we believe what we do about tongues. A correct understanding of speaking in tongues depends on a close reading of Isaiah 28:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 2:1-18; 10:44-48; 19:1-6; and I Corinthians 12-14.

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## USE OF TONGUES IN THE BIBLE

In the Bible, speaking in tongues falls into two distinct categories of use. We must distinguish between them to understand the subject.

1. Speaking in tongues is the initial sign, or evidence, that a person has received the Holy Ghost. See Isaiah 28:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 2:1-18; 10:44-48; 19:1-6.

2. The gift of tongues, or more precisely "divers kinds of tongues" (I Corinthians 12:10), is used among those who have already been baptized in the Holy Ghost. The gift of tongues is (1) for the personal edification of the believer as he or she speaks in tongues and (2) for the edification of the church as a whole when it is interpreted. See I Corinthians 12-14.

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## DEFINITION

By comparing Acts 2:4 with Acts 2:6, 8, 11, we find that the Bible defines "tongues" as actual languages. This definition applies to both categories described above.

- **Other tongues**—refers to languages that the speaker has never learned, spoken as the Spirit gives the utterance. They can be languages spoken by other nationalities as their native tongue. Although in each occurrence it is "another tongue" to the speaker, if someone is present who speaks the particular language, he can understand the speaker. This is what happened on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-18).

- **Unknown tongues**—The King James Version also uses the phrase "unknown tongue." Although the word *unknown* does not appear in the Greek, the context clearly conveys the meaning. The tongue is not understood by anyone present, but the speaker is speaking to God (I Corinthians 14:2).

In each case, speaking in tongues is supernatural since the speaker speaks as the Spirit gives the ability (Acts 2:4; I Corinthians 14:2).

**NOTES:**

## INITIAL EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST

Before beginning this part of the lesson, review lesson 5 for a thorough understanding of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ, in His earthly ministry, promised the Holy Ghost to His followers (Luke 24:49; John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:4-8). Christ's promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Peter declared that the promise of the Holy Ghost was for all people (Acts 2:38-39).

What is the scriptural evidence that we have received this glorious gift? The only Bible evidence of the initial infilling of the Holy Ghost is speaking in tongues. There is no other evidence given in the Scripture. A precedent has been set in the Word of God; New Testament believers spoke with tongues when they received the Holy Ghost.

The fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit are *not* the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but are the ongoing evidence that a person is walking in the Spirit.

An often used and incorrect explanation of speaking in tongues is that on the Day of Pentecost God gave the apostles the ability to preach to all the nationalities present in Jerusalem in their native languages. Acts 2:11 refutes this view, for the listeners declared, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." The 120 believers praised God and proclaimed His wonderful things in other languages as the Spirit enabled them, but it was the apostle Peter who actually preached to the curious onlookers who had gathered around the upper room. (See Acts 2:14-40.) In this sermon, Peter first used the keys to the kingdom of heaven that Jesus had given to him (Matthew 16:19). I have often wondered why the proponents of this explanation send their missionaries to language school. Why not let the Spirit simply anoint them to preach in the native tongue of the people?

Again, speaking in tongues is the one and only sign that God has given to New Testament believers as evidence they have received the Holy Ghost. Christ died at Calvary for us to have this glorious experience. It is the most wonderful thing that could happen in a person's life. The seeker should not ask God for tongues, but ask Him for the Holy Ghost; other tongues will accompany this gift.

If you have never experienced the exhilarating excitement of the Holy Ghost, I pray that you will do so as you study this lesson. Read Luke 11:9-13 and Acts 2:1-39.

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## EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY

The following discussion of speaking in tongues in the church, according to I Corinthians 12-14, is strictly for those who have already received the Holy Ghost, as outlined earlier. These remarks are not applicable to the sinner.

This use of tongues is not the initial evidence of being baptized in the Spirit, but it is one of several signs that occur in a body of believers who are full of the Holy Ghost. It

**NOTES:**

is good to speak with tongues for personal and church edification. But to require believers to speak with tongues on a scheduled basis as a sign that one still has the Holy Ghost is unscriptural. Many factors are indicative of our walking in the Spirit. Among them are (1) being obedient to the teaching of the Scriptures, (2) bearing the fruit of the Spirit, (3) being faithful to God's cause in every way, (4) abiding in Christ, and (5) adding to our experience the necessary ingredients for spiritual stabilization. See John 15:1-8; Galatians 5:22-23; II Peter 1:5-11, along with other passages, for clarification of this point.

Tongues, in this instance, is one of the nine gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:8-10). For an utterance to edify the assembled believers, another one of the nine spiritual gifts must accompany it, namely, the interpretation of tongues. The interpretation may be given by the person speaking with tongues or by another person.

Let us explain how tongues and interpretation may occur in a local church service. A believer, full of the Holy Ghost, is motivated or moved on by the Spirit to speak audibly in tongues to the whole assembly. In reverence to God's Spirit, the rest of the congregation should sit quietly in prayer, allowing God to perform His work of edification, exhortation, or comfort. Following a relatively short discourse in tongues, the speaker or someone else will interpret what was said. Both of these utterances must proceed by the Spirit's direction.

In I Corinthians, Paul was unquestionably giving instructions for a local church service when he gave rules to govern speaking in tongues. He said, "When ye come together . . . in the church" (I Corinthians 14:26, 28). While a church service is in progress, regulations are placed on both the public exercise of speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues. (See I Corinthians 14:26-28.) Speaking in tongues and interpretation for edification should come by "course," from the Greek word *meros*, which means a division, share, piece, portion, section, allotment, or by turn. Three such public utterances are the maximum allowed in any one church service. This does not mean that two or three people must speak with tongues before there can be an interpretation. Paul dealt with *courses* here, not *persons*.

After a maximum of three occurrences of speaking in tongues, whether or not there is an interpretation, speaking in tongues for congregational edification should cease. If others in the congregation still feel prompted to speak in tongues, they should speak to themselves and to God quietly, so the church service can progress. (See I Corinthians 14:27-28.) The same regulations apply to the gift of prophecy, which is a Spirit-inspired utterance spoken audibly in the native tongue of the local assembly.

Three of the nine spiritual gifts involve speaking: prophecy, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. These are not to replace or supersede the preached Word of God. Churches are not perfected, but only edified, by spiritual gifts. God gave the ministry to the church for its perfection (Ephesians 4:11-12). The control of every service should be in the hands of the pastor or other leader in charge of the service.

Speaking in tongues plus interpretation is equal to and accomplishes the same as prophecy. God chose tongues and interpretation as a sign to unbelievers (I Corinthians

**NOTES:**

14:22). Both a tongue that is interpreted and prophecy are for one or more of the following three purposes: edification, exhortation, and comfort (I Corinthians 14:3).

God does not give spiritual gifts to a believer to set the church in order, to conduct business affairs, to purchase or not to purchase property, to build or not to build buildings, to instruct others in giving money, to pronounce judgment on individuals, to direct two people to marry, or to accept or reject ministers, and so on. Those who claim to do so are speaking from their own spirits and not by the Spirit of God. Spiritual gifts must be exercised for the three purposes just stated. Paul encouraged, "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (I Corinthians 14:12).

Paul listed peace, decency, and order (I Corinthians 14:33, 40) as the guiding principles for any church service. Anything that violates one of these three principles is wrong—whether it be supposed gifts of the Spirit, preaching, singing, testifying, playing instruments, hand clapping, receiving offerings, entering and leaving the building, or any other factor involving order and decorum in God's house. These guidelines do not in any way discourage or forbid the use of any genuine spiritual gift. (See I Corinthians 14:39.)

The following facts concerning speaking in unknown tongues are aids to witnessing and for giving others a reason of the hope that is in us:

- When believers speak in tongues, they are speaking to God.
- No one understands them.
- In the spirit, they are speaking mysteries.
- They edify themselves.
- They should pray that they may be able to interpret.
- Speaking in tongues is secondary to prophecy unless someone gives the interpretation.
- Speaking in tongues is a sign to unbelievers.

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## EDIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER

At this juncture let us discuss speaking in tongues for personal edification, that is, tongues that need no interpretation. These tongues may be used in one or more of the following ways:

1. **Prayer**—Praying in tongues is a blessing and a privilege of the saint of God. Although the understanding is unfruitful, the spirit is edified (I Corinthians 14:14-15). We are to pray with the understanding, i.e., in our native language,

**NOTES:**

but if God's Spirit prompts us, we are to pray in tongues. On such occasions, we are speaking directly to God, and our communication with Him is perfect.

2. **Singing**—The same things just said about praying in tongues also apply to singing in tongues. We may not understand the words, but our inward person is renewed and blessed (I Corinthians 14:15). Singing with the understanding, i.e., in our native tongue, brings a blessing also.

3. **Giving thanks**—In this example, a believer may be blessing something or someone and begin speaking with tongues. This is a form of praising God and offering thanksgiving in unknown tongues both publicly and privately (I Corinthians 14:16-18). The same principle of points 1 and 2 apply here also.

All three of these types of speaking in tongues may be exercised in public or private. If in a public service, the type and order of the service will dictate whether our praying, singing, or giving thanks in tongues should be done audibly or to ourselves and to God. If it would be disruptive or would stop the progression of the service, we should be silent (I Corinthians 14:19, 28).

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## CONCLUSION

No contradiction exists between Paul's admonition to "quench not the Spirit" (I Thessalonians 5:19) and his statement that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (I Corinthians 14:32). Quenching the Spirit means to refuse to allow God's Spirit to use or to bless us when it is proper and in order. Subjection of our spirits has to do with control. It is essential that we control ourselves in the house of God in order to promote peace, decency, and order.

We should never study spiritual gifts without including I Corinthians 13:1-13. The Bible's teaching on charity (love) here is without parallel. Charity, which is the love of God expressed through us, supersedes faith and hope.

Speaking with tongues is God's method of controlling and using, for His glory, the most unruly member of the body—the tongue (James 3:1-18). May our voices be lifted to Him in praise and adoration, whether in our native tongue or in an unknown tongue!

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The chart on the following page was produced by Rev. S. G. Norris, President, Apostolic Bible Institute, 6944 Hudson Road No., St. Paul, Minnesota, 55119, U.S.A.

**NOTES:**


TONGUES
EVIDENCE
All references found in Acts where believers were first receiving the Spirit
Immediate outward evidence announcing arrival of the Spirit.
All believers speak when they receive the Spirit. Any number may speak at once.
No interpretation required.
Uniform evidence for all.
GIFT
All references are found in I Corinthians where saints already had the spirit.
Not all saints have this gift, as the Spirit divides severally as He will.
DIVERS KINDS OF TONGUES
DEVOTIONAL
1. Private.
2. Edify self.
3. Man to God.
4. No interpretation required.
5. No man understands.
6. No limit on number.
CONGREGATIONAL
1. Public.
2. Edify church.
3. God to man.
4. Interpretation needed.
5. Understood by interpretation.
6. Two or three by course.

**LESSON 7**

**NOTES:**

# I'M SAVED—NOW WHAT?

## ACTS 9:1-9

Life's greatest step is to turn from sin and to God. After this, we follow Him as His Word gives direction. We have already studied the steps we must take to be saved from sin. Once we have obeyed these biblical truths, the question arises, "Now what?" When God began talking to Saul (later Paul), his request to God was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Saul found the answer through Ananias's ministry to him. He was saved at this time and went on to become a great apostle.

God's Word, which tells us how to be saved, also instructs us in how to stay saved. Denominations of all kinds have certain rules, regulations, and codes of conduct for their members. In reality, our best source is the Bible. If we will follow its teachings and obey its instructions, all will be well.

Our destiny of heaven is not automatically secured just because we have been born again (John 3:1-8). The new birth is an essential step, but it is only the beginning of our walk with God. Salvation is an experience that will sustain us for a lifetime, if we grow and develop as God's Word directs.

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After we are born again, we discover the reality of the devil's opposition to us. We now have an enemy of our souls who will tempt, test, and try us through every devious device possible. But we should not be dismayed, for "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). Failure does not have to be our lot. God saved us so that we would succeed spiritually, be victorious, and be overcomers.

This lesson introduces basic principles and facts from God's Word as a support system for the newfound experience of salvation. I have practiced them in my own life and have observed them practiced in the lives of others with success. There are no shortcuts; no one is exempt; the rules apply to all. We have not yet reached our destination; we have only begun. The road is not obscure, because "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

This lesson presents introductory truths for both the new convert and the experienced saint. It contains practical advice, commonsense approaches, and simple basics to ensure spiritual security and growth in Christ. We are not all we will be or can become. Let us accept the challenge to live for God and to grow in Him.

**NOTES:**

## BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

New converts should not be offended at being called beginners. Age has nothing to do with it, only their status in Christ. *Now what?* is a big question for all new converts. They are overwhelmed with new feelings, friends, and disciplines. They want to be their best and be a blessing, but they wonder just where to start.

Let me share sound biblical principles (which my personal experience of over thirty-two years has proved to be true and good) that will tell you what you need to do. We *begin* with the Scriptures, and we *grow* as we follow them.

- **Bible Reading**—One of the most important tools we have is the Word of God—the Bible. As a part of our Christian armor (Ephesians 6:17), it is vital to our Christian living. (See Psalm 19:7-11; I Peter 2:1-3.) Begin your Bible reading with these recommendations:

  1. Read the New Testament through first.

  2. I recommend the King James Version of the Bible. But you can use other translations for reference.

  3. Endeavor to read the entire Bible through in the next twelve months. Reading only three chapters daily and five on Sunday will accomplish this goal. Approximately fifteen minutes daily is all the time needed.

  4. Commit to memory inspirational and salvation-related verses.

  5. Take your Bible with you to every church service. Find the verses that the minister cites.

  6. Study the lessons in this manual regarding the Bible and its place in our lives: “The Importance of the Word of God” and “How to Study the Bible Systematically.”

- **Prayer**—Another vital key to being an overcoming Christian is to develop a strong prayer life. Develop a consistent, increasing prayer life for your needs and the needs of others. (See Matthew 6:5-13; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-14; 21:34-36; I Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:13-18.)

  1. Make prayer a daily affair.

  2. Pray with your family if they are saved.

  3. Develop the ability to pray at length. Do not be discouraged if you cannot do so at first, for this comes through practice, experience, and perseverance.

  4. Go to church early and pray before every service.

**NOTES:**

5. God hears and answers prayer. Never be dismayed or doubtful if your prayers are not answered when and how you want them to be.

6. Look up passages of Scripture relating to prayer and obey them.

7. In times of sickness, obey James 5:13-18 by calling for the pastor and the elders of the church.

8. Study the lessons in this manual on prayer: "What is Prayer" and "Importunity in Prayer."

- **Fasting**—Another powerful weapon that we have is the discipline of fasting. Self-control is a must in fasting, but the rewards are great. Fasting is one of the best weapons we have to obtain humility, to exercise power over Satan, and to affect the lives of others. (See Psalm 35:13; 69:10; 109:24; Matthew 4:1-11; 9:14-18; 17:14-21; Acts 10:30-33.)

  1. Fasting is simply doing without food, or both food and water.

  2. Commit yourself to fast on a regular basis. It is healthy, both physically and spiritually.

  3. Occasionally go on extended fasts, that is, more than one day at a time.

  4. When your pastor calls for a time of fasting, observe it if there is any way possible.

- **Church Attendance**—No one succeeds in living for God if he or she is unfaithful in church attendance. Church attendance should be a number-one priority in our lives. Regardless of the weather, visiting guests, or other petty hindrances, be faithful in church attendance. (See Acts 2:41-47; 3:1; Hebrews 10:23-29.)

  1. Find a home church as a regular place for worship; do not run from church to church.

  2. Attend each regular service in your church.

  3. Attend each revival service or special service.

  4. When there are services at your church, do not attend another church, even though you may like their program or the speaker better than the one at home. Only attend special services at other churches when you are not having services at your church.

  5. Participate, worship, sit up front, and get involved in the church services. Ignore distractions, overlook petty problems, and let God and His house be the center of your life.

**NOTES:**

- **Witnessing**—Salvation is life's greatest experience; share what you have received with others regardless of race, creed, color, or religious persuasion. Never be ashamed of your personal experience and relationship with God. (See Daniel 12:3; Mark 16:20; Acts 1:8; 2:32.)

  1. Tell others what Christ has done for you.

  2. Your greatest testimony is the life you live.

  3. After you have been trained, begin teaching others home Bible studies.

  4. Show a Christian spirit in your witnessing. Do not be argumentative or judgmental, but show love and kindness to those to whom you witness.

  5. Show friendliness to all visitors to your church by shaking their hand, giving them church literature, showing them the church building, and so on. Pray with visitors who come forward to the altar for prayer.

  6. Do not make sarcastic remarks about others' religion either publicly or privately. Never mention anything to visitors about their nonadherence to church standards.

- **Get Involved in Your Church's Ministries**—Become an immediate participant in all of your church's programs. Join in and blend yourself into every church activity. Get involved; you will be quickly accepted and appreciated. Petty problems will arise, but don't let them discourage you, for church work is fun and rewarding.

  1. Being new does not restrict you. Do not be bashful, but get involved; the pastor and other members will appreciate your involvement.

  2. Take an interest in the church property; help clean, paint, build, and so on.

  3. Accept responsibility. You are needed and are important to the cause of Christ.

  4. Whatever your age, gender, abilities, or financial status, there is something you can do. Find your place and fill it well.

  5. Never become envious of someone else's talents or position. God will open doors of opportunity for you to serve if you remain faithful.

  6. Whatever the church is doing, do not criticize; become a part of the program.

  7. Support your church with your finances through tithes, offerings, and bequests.

**NOTES:**

8. When new people move into the community and want to make your church their church, accept, love, and introduce them. Help them feel that they belong and are a part of the church and community.

I have never seen anyone fail God when he or she keeps alive this plan of action in his or her life. Some of these steps require hard-fought battles, but they are well worth the effort. The happiest people in the world are those involved in causes bigger than themselves. God's cause is the greatest in the world, and His retirement program for the faithful is literally out of this world!

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## YOUR PASTOR

Now that you are saved, you will become involved with the ministry of God-called people who have been chosen to preach and teach you the Word of God. These men and women will provide spiritual leadership both to you and to the entire church body. Following these basic guidelines will assure you of a good relationship with your leaders:

1. Your pastor is your spiritual bishop, or overseer. (See Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-7.)

2. Other ministers, along with your pastor, will dispense spiritual food for your soul's growth and progress. Receive it with thanksgiving, checking in your Bible to see what they preach and teach. (See Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4.)

3. Perfection (maturity) and edification will come to you through the ministry of the Word of God. (See Ephesians 4:11-14.)

4. God's method for saving people and building their faith is the preaching of the Word of God. (See Romans 10:14-17; I Corinthians 1:21.)

5. God has set the ministry, especially your pastor, as a watchman over your soul. (See Ezekiel 3:17-21; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:2.)

6. Obedience to your pastor is required as long as what he asks you to do is scriptural and right. (See Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24.)

7. Esteem and honor true and faithful ministers of the gospel regardless of their age or position. (See Philippians 2:25-30; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; I Timothy 5:17-19).

Your pastor and other ministers are mere men and women, called with a heavenly calling to preach the Word of God. Their humanity does not negate the foregoing truths. Love your pastor, heed his advice, honor him, obey his preaching, and God's blessings will rest upon you and your family. Never join the ranks of the critics, rebellious, or disobedient. Be supportive, prayerful, and encourage your minister. Pastors need to hear

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preaching just like others; allow him the privilege of going to special meetings and conferences. Insist that he take time with his family, take some time off, and take a vacation. All this will only serve to make him a better leader.

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## YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

Your coming to Christ will open many doors of fellowship with others. Interpersonal relationships are vital to our spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. It is important that these relationships be wholesome and spiritual for our good and the good of others. Observing the following points will prove helpful.

- **With Sinners**—Now that you have become a Christian, your old associates will closely observe everything you say and do. It is extremely important to set the proper example before your associates.

  1. We are to "provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). (See also II Corinthians 8:21.)

  2. If your friends are unsaved, endeavor to lead them to Christ by living a holy and godly life before them. (See I Corinthians 7:13-16; I Peter 3:1-6.)

  3. Conduct yourself in wisdom and honesty toward all people, especially sinners (Colossians 4:5-6). (See also I Thessalonians 4:12.)

  4. God's people are the light of the world and the salt of the earth; conduct yourself accordingly (Matthew 5:13-16). (See also Philippians 2:15.)

Be a Christian at all times and in all places, and all will be well.

- **With Saints**—Christians are the greatest people in the world, and your finest moments of fellowship will be among them. Friends of unparalleled proportions will become yours through your years of association in a local church. God's people will endear themselves to you in a measure often greater than your own relatives.

Before long, you will discover that a few do not obey the teachings of the Bible and the pastor. They profess much but possess little. Love and pray for them, but limit your fellowship with them. They constantly complain, criticize, gripe, and fuss. Becoming deeply involved with them will corrupt your good spirit. Choose the best, follow their example, become their friend and prayer partner, and you will be happy.

1. Be an example to other believers (I Timothy 4:12-16).

2. Observe the example of others. (See Titus 2:1-15; I Peter 5:3.)

3. Expand your circle of friends; have fellowship with all the saints, not just a few. (See Acts 2:42; I John 1:7.)

4. Become a peacemaker, build love and harmony in your local assembly, encourage new converts, and pray for others. (See Matthew 5:9; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 2:21.)

5. Practice the conduct of the converted as outlined in Romans 12:9-21.

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Living for God is beautiful, exciting, and rewarding both now and eternally. Follow these biblical and commonsense guidelines; they will spare you many hurts and pitfalls. This lesson has left many areas untouched, but through personal study, experience, the guidance of your pastor, and the help of God, you will overcome. Appropriate all of God's good gifts and promises for yourself; your life will be happy and blessed.

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**LESSON 8**

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# ARE BELIEVERS ETERNALLY SECURE IN CHRIST?

### JOHN 10:22-33; II PETER 2:20-22

Being saved and going to heaven or being lost and going to hell are two serious and sobering subjects. The subject at hand is pertinent to both aspects. Being deceived about salvation has eternal consequences. With an open mind, let us consult the Bible, the final authority on any subject.

From the Scriptures we must determine whether in this life we have unconditional eternal security in Christ. Once we are saved, are we always and irrevocably saved? We would be remiss if we determined our position on any matter, especially one of such importance, without first consulting the Bible.

A study of this topic involves questions:

1. Is it possible to fall from grace? In other words, can a believer backslide, fall away, and be cut off from Christ?

2. Are believers unconditionally and eternally secure in Christ? That is, once we are saved, are we always saved without any chance of being lost?

Other questions abound in conjunction with our subject. It is impossible to answer all of them in this lesson, but let us go to God's Word for help.

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## ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY

Augustine was the first leader in church history to teach the doctrine of unconditional eternal security. He was born in Tagaste, Numidia, in A.D. 354 and died at Hippo Regius, Numidia, in A.D. 430. The following quote encapsulates an important aspect of Augustine's theology, namely, individual predestination:

> Man was created pure, in God's image, and possessed of a free will. He was tempted and fell, and in him all humanity sinned. But man was capable of restoration, not of himself, but of God's grace. This grace comes not because man believes, but precedes faith, and is given that he may believe. From this grace all the stages of repentance, conversion, and final perseverance are reached and passed through. Now, as grace is a free gift of God, and precedes all acts of faith on man's part, and as experience shows that not all men become converted and are saved, it must follow that God absolutely predestinates a certain number to salvation and that the rest are left to their merited damnation.[1]

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Augustine left extensive writings, among which are these remarks:

> [God] used the very will of the creature which was working in opposition to the Creator's will as an instrument for carrying out His will, the supremely Good thus turning to good account even what is evil, to the condemnation of those whom in His justice He has predestined to punishment, and to the salvation of those whom in His mercy He has predestined to grace. For as far as relates to their own consciousness, these creatures did what God wished not to be done: but in view of God's omnipotence, they could in no wise effect their purpose.[2]

Augustine's doctrine of predestination lay somewhat dormant for many years. It was reactivated and reinforced by the early Reformers, including Martin Luther and John Calvin. Calvin in particular promoted and emphasized the doctrine. He was born in Noyon, France, in 1509, and died in Geneva in 1546. Calvin stated:

> If it is plain that it comes to pass by God's bidding that salvation is freely offered to some while others are barred from access to it, at once great and difficult questions spring up, explicable only when reverent minds regard as settled what they may suitably hold concerning election and predestination. . . . We shall never be clearly persuaded, as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the wellspring of God's free mercy until we come to know his eternal election, which illumines God's grace by this contrast: that he does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation but gives to some what he denies to others. . . . Human curiosity renders the discussion of predestination, already somewhat difficult of itself, very confusing and even dangerous.[3]

Calvin leaned heavily upon the teachings of Augustine as a basis for his teaching. Although he was strongly supportive of Augustine, he questioned the clarity of his teaching on predestination.

Though apparently questionable even in his own mind, Calvin still persisted in embracing the teaching that individuals are predestined to either salvation or damnation. He did not allow for the free will or choice of a person in any way when it comes to salvation. According to Calvin, God alone has predetermined every person's eternal destiny.

> We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others. Therefore, as any man has been created to one or the other of these ends, we speak of him as predestined to life or death.[4]

This teaching has been embraced, revised, and taught through the years until it has widespread acceptance even today. Included in this doctrine is the concept of bondage of the will versus freedom of the will. Under this view, humans have no ability to choose salvation but are divinely predestined to salvation or damnation, only as God wills. This doctrine also embraces the concept of a limited atonement, that is, Christ did not die for the sins of all humans, but only a select few. If so, Christ died for only a chosen few

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who have no alternative but to accept Him. God denies grace, love, and mercy to the rest of humanity, and they are doomed without choice. There is no need for believers to try to persevere since they receive irresistible grace with no responsibility. It is therefore utterly impossible for them to fall from the grace of God and be lost. Were Calvin and Augustine right in this doctrine?

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## PASSAGES USED TO SUPPORT PREDESTINATION OF INDIVIDUALS

Those who teach predestination of individuals rely on many verses of Scripture as a basis for this doctrine. For the sake of space, we will only use a few.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any many pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John 10:27-30).

Read all of John 10 for the context of this quoted passage. In this chapter, Jesus taught about the Shepherd (Himself), the sheep (the saved), and the sheepfold (the church). Jesus further spoke of strangers, hirelings, and wolves, which have no care for the flock. Christ's messiahship and deity were questioned in this chapter also. He stated emphatically, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30), affirming that He is God and also affirming the belief of the Jews that there is only one God.

Christ's statement that no one can pluck His sheep out of His hand clearly distinguishes between *Christ* and the *hireling*. While the hirelings flee, Christ lays down His life for the sheep.

- **Pluck**—comes from the Greek verb *harpazo*, meaning to seize, catch away, pull, take by force. Remaining in Christ's protective care is contingent upon following Him. (See John 6:35-40; 10:27.) Security in Christ is conditional on our continued faith in Him as demonstrated by our obedience to His commands in the Scripture. Humans or Satan cannot pluck us from the hand of God as long as we walk by faith in Him, following His Word. Refusing to do so would result in our being severed from Christ, which would occur by our own volition.

Another passage commonly used to support the teaching of predestination is the following: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

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To understand this passage, read the entire chapter of Romans 8. It declares that a believer has no condemnation as long as he or she walks after the Spirit and not after the flesh. The chapter warns believers not to be carnally minded; it encourages them to be led by the Spirit and to mortify (kill) the deeds of the body so they will live.

In discussing our spiritual warfare, Paul asked whether anything has power or strength to separate us from the love of God. He declared, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). Nothing can separate us from the love of God, but the passage does not hint or suggest that we are thereby unconditionally secure or predestined to salvation. We must keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21); it is possible to take ourselves out of His care. If we continue to live by faith in Christ according to His Word and reject Satan's devices to entice us away from the love of God, then we will be saved in the end. In this life, our security in Christ is dependent upon our continuing to walk by obedient faith. (See Romans 1:17.)

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## STRUCTURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament comprises twenty-seven books. Four are Gospels, recording the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. Acts of the Apostles describes the formation of the church and its spread through the then-known world. The twenty-one Epistles are letters to believers, or saints. Revelation, the final book, has future events as its main focus.

God wants us to retain what He gave us in the New Testament. These books cover Christian conduct, manner of lifestyle, modes of dress, and so on. Much of the material in them would be wasted material if believers are irrevocably secure in Christ.

God's Word demands that we give diligence to our salvation lest we fall from the grace of God or come short of His glory. (See II Peter 1:10.)

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## SCRIPTURES EXPRESSING CONDITION

Remaining in Christ is conditioned upon our continued faith. As we appropriate to ourselves God's truths, we have assurance of a continued relationship with Christ. If we ignore scriptural conditions, we will be excluded from a covenantal relationship with Christ. None of our discussion precludes repentance and returning to God when we fail; those in view here are the willful, continual, and unrepentant habitual transgressors of God's Word.

There are 1,522 "*ifs*" in the Scriptures that express condition!

Only a few of the 1,522 available verses are given below in order to highlight that individual responsibility is a part of receiving God's promises, including eternal life.

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"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Peter 1:10).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

"But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6).

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14).

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Colossians 1:21-23).

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## SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS CONCERNING ETERNAL SECURITY

Let us step into eternity past before the creation of humans, follow the Bible through the various ages, and view how God deals with sin. The distant past along with the freshness of the moment bear record, both scripturally and experientially, that those who have been saved have failed and do fail God at times. Undeniable facts and truths counter our wishes that Augustine and Calvin were right. This insidious ploy of Satan is designed to get us to drop our guard against the world, the flesh, and the devil. To do so would quickly entangle us again in the same snares and pollutions from which Christ delivered us. Historical evidence from the Bible gives solemn warning to us today.

- **Angels**—God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them down to hell, reserved for judgment. The highest order of created beings, secure and seemingly beyond the ability to fail, did so and were cast down because of sin (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

- **Adam and Eve**—From the most sublime state humans have ever experienced, Adam and Eve fell into the trap of sin. The Bible gives us warnings lest Satan use the same weapon against us that he used against Eve. (See Genesis 2-3; Romans 5:12-21; II Corinthians 11:3.)

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- **Israel**—God delivered them from Egypt but then destroyed them for continually disobeying His commands (Jude 5; Hebrews 3:6-19).

- **Judas Iscariot**—He obtained a part of the apostolic ministry, was treasurer of the Twelve, and was sent out to heal the sick and to preach the gospel, but then he fell by transgression (Acts 1:15-16).

- **Ananias and Sapphira**—They were among the believers (Acts 4:32), but Satan filled their heart to lie to the Holy Ghost (God). Could they possibly be saved when God has already decreed the destiny of liars? (See Revelation 21:8.)

- **Hymenaeus and Philetus**—Apparently they were once in the truth since they erred from it (II Timothy 2:15-19; I Timothy 1:18-20).

- **Ephesus and Laodicea**—The churches in these cities were in danger of having their candlesticks removed unless they repented (Revelation 2:1-11; 3:14-22). If God's judgment would be against a congregation, what about an individual?

The seven graphic examples from God's Word warn us lest we fall from the grace of God. How important it is to retain a strong biblical relationship with our Lord!

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## WARNINGS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL FAILURE

Three Greek words in the New Testament are translated into English as *fall*. Let us study the passages that employ these terms for clarification on the subject. Remember, we are considering whether or not we can fall from grace once we have have been saved.

- **Ekpipto**—means to drop away, be driven out of one's course, lose, become inefficient, be cast, fail, take none effect.

- **Empipto**—means to fall on, be entrapped by, be overwhelmed with, fall among.

- **Ptaio**—means to trip, err, sin, fail of salvation, offend, stumble.

These definitions appear in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and apply to the passages below. Because of space, we will give only a few references here; you may search out others through study.

1. Believers are instructed in how to handle a brother or sister overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1; See James 5:19-20).

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2. Bishops are warned about falling into the condemnation and snare of the devil (I Timothy 3:1-7).

3. When we think we stand, we are warned to take heed lest we fall (I Corinthians 10:12). Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).

4. Warnings are given to those who were once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good Word of God, and tasted the powers of the world to come (Hebrews 6:1-8). If it is not possible to fall, why such warnings?

5. Those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:27-30). Could a previous believer commit this sin? Hebrews 6:1-8; 12:15-17 and I John 5:16-17 indicate that it is possible.

6. Peter, the man with the keys to the kingdom of heaven, warned us who have escaped the pollutions of the world, that to become entangled *again* would cause us to be *worse* than we were before we were saved. It would be better never to have known the way of truth than, after we have known it, to turn from it (II Peter 2:20-22). (See Galatians 4:9; 5:1.)

7. Paul declared to some that they had fallen from grace (Galatians 5:1-4). Would he say that if it were not possible to fall from grace?

8. We are to look diligently lest we fail of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:14-17). *Fail* in this verse comes from the Greek word *hustereo,* meaning to be inferior, fall short, be deficient, come behind, be short, and lack.

9. Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail (Luke 22:32). *Fail* in this verse comes from the Greek word *peto,* meaning to fall, fail, and fall down.

10. We are to be aware lest we are led away with the error of the wicked and *fall* from our steadfastness (II Peter 3:14-18). Peter also gave a list of things we are to add to our faith, and if we obey, we will never fall (II Peter 1:1-11). Thank God, we do not have to fall. We can be a success spiritually. (See Jude 24.)

11. In the parable of the sower, some seed fell on stony ground and among thorns (Luke 8:4-15). These two classes of people obeyed and found God, but they did not last or endure to the end. This can and does happen today.

12. God can blot our name out of His book of life. (See Exodus 32:33; Revelation 3:5.) Our names had to be there once in order to be blotted out.

13. In the last days some shall depart from the faith (I Timothy 4:1). Surely someone has to be in the faith before they can depart from it.

14. Again, warnings are given to believers lest they tread under foot the blood of

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the Son of God and insult the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:26-39).

The Bible warns us strongly not to go back to the things from which God has delivered us. I find no safety in thinking I am eternally secure in Christ in light of all these warnings. In all honesty, I fear lest I would fall. May the verses in this lesson warn us sufficiently. In conjunction with the above, study the following passages of Scripture: Luke 9:62; John 15:1-10; Romans 6:13-23; I Corinthians 9:27; I Thessalonians 3:5; Colossians 1:21-23; I Timothy 4:16; Hebrews 3:12-14; James 1:15.

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## DANGERS OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY

There many dangers associated with the doctrine of unconditional eternal security. The greatest objection is that it is unbiblical. It results in the following ten dangers, along with others, that can destroy believers.

1. It removes the fear of God from the believer's life.
2. It destroys the desire to fast and pray.
3. It promotes worldliness and sin among believers.
4. It stops faithfulness to church services and activities.
5. It retards strong consecration and dedication to God.
6. It discourages paying of tithes, offerings, and helping the needy.
7. It denies the possibility of Satan overcoming us. (See I Thessalonians 3:5; I Peter 5:8.)
8. It breeds separation in marriage, divorce, and immoral living.
9. It renders church ordinances, standards of conduct, rules and regulations, and the twenty-one Epistles useless and unworthy of our attention and adherence.
10. It creates a false sense of spiritual security, causing laxity in every aspect of our service to God, though the Scriptures warn us to be prayerful and watchful.

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## CONCLUSIVE TRUTHS

We must conclude and affirm unequivocally that the following truths are applicable to us today:

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1. Predestination of the church is a Bible truth. Yet there is no validity to the idea that *individuals* are predestined of God to be either saved or lost. God has *foreknowledge* of this, but has not decreed or predestined such.

2. No believer is unconditionally eternally secure; all believers are subject to failure and must diligently walk by faith to inherit eternal life in the end.

3. God's Word does not teach the bondage of the human will but that humans are free moral agents with the ability to accept or to reject salvation, and even to reject Christ after once accepting Him.

4. Although we are saved by grace, kept by grace, and presented faultless before the throne of His presence by grace, yet in this life we can fall from the grace of God.

5. The Bible does not teach that we can reach flawless perfection (as we normally understand the meaning of perfection) in this life. Believers who are overcome by sin through lust and temptation can repent and be restored to favor with God through the advocacy of Jesus Christ. (See I John 2:1-2).

6. Believers who continue in sin without repentance and do not live by faith will fall from grace and will be lost. (See John 15:1-11; Revelation 2:5; 3:14-22.)

7. Christ's atonement was unlimited, that is, He died for the sins of the whole world, not just for the predestined few.

8. God gives sufficient grace to every saint to maintain victory over sin and Satan, but it is absolutely essential for Christians to persevere through faith.

9. An individual can resist God's call to salvation and His grace. God does not make certain people respond to His call. We are free moral agents who can choose either to serve God or to refuse to serve Him. (See Joshua 24:14-25.)

10. Jesus Christ died for all. He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). We can live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). It is not His will that any perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). No one has a greater love than this!

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God's plan of redemption through Calvary is unparalleled. There remains no more sacrifice for sins! What the blood of bulls and goats could not do through centuries of time, Christ did in one offering once and for all. Neglecting so great a salvation closes every door of escape, but obeying it brings heaven's blessings upon us here and opens heaven's gates in eternity. Though we were weak, frail, sinful, and hell-bound when He found us, now through the power of His Spirit, we can be victorious over sin and Satan. It is possible for us to fail, but thanks to God we do not have to; His grace is sufficient.

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"Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24-25).

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## ENDNOTES

[1]John Fletcher Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1893), 50-51.

[2]Augustine, trans. J. F. Shaw, ed. Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 11:269.

[3]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeil (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1940) 2:921-22.

[4]Ibid., 2:926.

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## NOTES

**LESSON 9**

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# RESTORATION OF THE ERRING

## GALATIANS 6:1-10; I JOHN 2:1-2

In our previous lesson, we learned that it is possible to fall from the grace of God. It is not our desire to fall or to see others fall. God wills that all people come to repentance and, after they are born again, that they remain in Christ.

The Bible strongly condemns sin in the life of the saint of God. (See Romans 6:1-23; I John 2:1-2; 3:1-10.) Because of the power of temptation from Satan, the world, and the flesh, often even the best saints come short of what God wants them to be. Although this is not an excuse to sin, it is simply a fact of life. Our souls are cleansed, purified, and saved from sin, but we still live in a body with an Adamic nature, prone to sin.

True believers constantly endeavor to live free from sin. Saints of God do not believe, and the Bible does not teach, that once they are saved they can then go on living in their same sinful ways. We are to walk in the newness of life as new creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). We are to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, walking holy before the Lord (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1). The born-again experience (John 3:1-8) accomplishes this in our lives *if* we walk in faith and obedience to God's Word.

Believers can err, be overtaken in a fault, and come short of the glory of God. How do we deal with this dilemma in our lives and in the lives of others? Does one failure doom us to hell? Can a failing saint be forgiven? Can one be restored to favor with God and humans?

God's Word has an answer for us.

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## BELIEVERS ARE COMMANDED NOT TO SIN

The Bible, without question, teaches deliverance from sin. Once we are delivered, we have a responsibility to walk in obedience to the Scripture. We are not to submit to the sinful desires and practices we once engaged in. God's Word clearly commands us not to sin.

1. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2).

2. "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:15).

3. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not" (I John 2:1).

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4. God's grace teaches us that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2:11-12).

5. I John 3:1-10 gives some explicit instructions to believers concerning sin.

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## IF BELIEVERS SIN

God, knowing our weaknesses and tendencies to err, has provided a method for handling the sin problem in the saved person's life. Salvation does not give us a glorified body devoid of thoughts and desires displeasing to God. Satan, through his access to our mind, thought life, and senses, bombards each of us with temptation and enticement to evil. Jesus Christ knew what our problems would be when He provided salvation for us through His death at Calvary. In His redemptive plan, He also made provision for the restoration of those who fail, err, or go astray.

In view of our responsibility to walk holy before the Lord, we present the following passages of Scripture to the sincere, faithful child of God. Insincere, dishonest, loose-living, and hypocritical individuals are not included. We will discuss how to handle sin and error in our lives after we are saved.

1. Ezekiel was a watchman to the house of Israel, warning both the righteous and the wicked of their sins. Ministers today fill the same role in our lives. Heeding the warning of God's Word through preaching and teaching is our responsibility. When warned of sin in their lives, erring believers are to turn from their sin. (See Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:7-19.)

2. "If any man sin" (I John 2:1) is written to believers. First, the Bible warns us not to sin. But if we do, God has a provision for correcting the sin. His provision is not only for the world, but for the church also. (See I John 2:1-2.)

3. Later on, I John addresses brothers, or fellow servants of Jesus Christ. It approached sin from two standpoints (I John 5:16-17): a sin not unto death and a sin unto death.

   In I John 2:1-2 *advocate* comes from the Greek word *parakletos*, meaning an intercessor, consoler, or comforter, while *propitiation* comes from the Greek word *hilasmos*, meaning atonement or an expiator. Propitiation has to do with someone who *propitiates*, or regains the good will or favor of one who is unhappy with us. Jesus Christ is our high priest, advocate, intercessor, and propitiation.

   We are to pray for an erring brother or sister who has not sinned a sin unto death. Life (spiritual) can be given to such a person. There is a sin unto death, however, for which prayer would not avail anything.

   As a body unites and provides care for each member, so should the church.

**NOTES:**

(See I Corinthians 12:12-27.) We should restore the erring, strengthen the weak, and encourage the downcast with love and concern in the same manner that we care for our own physical body.

4. James addressed the *brethren*, or members of the body of Christ (James 5:19-20), concerning our individual responsibility to an erring brother or sister. *Err* in this passage comes from the Greek word *planao*, meaning to roam from safety, truth, or virtue; go astray, wander, or be out of the way.

5. Paul spoke to the church on the same subject of restoration. (See Galatians 6:1-2.) Let us notice the two persons in these verses.

| **Restorer** | **One Restored** |
|---|---|
| Is a brother | Is a brother |
| Is spiritual | Is tempted |
| Is meek | Is overtaken in a fault |
| Considers himself | Became unspiritual |
| Bears brother's burden | Under the burden of sin |

- **Restore**—in this instance means to repair, adjust, mend, or make perfect. Mark used it in the sense of mending nets (Mark 1:19). It is also used for setting bones or reconciling factions.

- **Overtaken**—in this verse means to take in advance, surprise, come upon, or take unawares.

- **Fault**—here means a missing of the mark, a fall, false step, blunder, failure to achieve.

May these passages alert us to our responsibility toward our brethren, our need to remain spiritual, our need to be on guard against temptation, and our need of having the proper spirit while helping and restoring the erring.

## SOLUTIONS FOR THE SIN PROBLEM

God's Word is replete with instances, instructions, and methods of dealing with sin in our lives as well as in the lives of others. We do not want others to fail; neither do we intend to fail ourselves. We should use every available means to prevent failure in our lives. God cares deeply about each of us and does not cast us away nearly as quickly as people do. Brethren can eliminate as well as solve errors, faults, and offenses when they put into effect God's plan of action, as outlined below. We will give only a brief notation on each point here, but detailed study should be given to each.

**NOTES:**

1. It is our responsibility to seek reconciliation with those who have something against us (Matthew 5:21-24).

2. God has a method for correcting trespasses and faults between brethren (Matthew 18:15-35).

3. We are to pray for our brethren when they sin (I John 5:16-17). Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail (Luke 22:31-32). Job's situation improved when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10). Samuel prayed for Saul, even when God had rejected Saul (I Samuel 15:35). Samuel never ceased to pray for Israel, although they turned against him (I Samuel 12:23). Oh, the power of prayer in healing hurts, dissolving differences, and removing offenses! We should preface every effort to restore the erring with prayer.

4. Jesus instructed us on how to treat our brother or sister when he or she trespasses against us and then repents. (See Luke 17:3-4.)

5. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13).

6. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:25-26).

Only major biblical points have been presented here; apply them in times of stress, offenses, and trial. Never resort to unbiblical practices in handling hurts and differences with others. Corinthian saints were going to law before unbelievers with problems that should have been settled within the church (I Corinthians 6:1-8).

Division is one of Satan's most effective weapons. If he can cause us to hold grudges, trespass against others, offend others, or not to forgive others, his mission is accomplished. We are not ignorant of his devices; let us be wise lest he take advantage of us in this vulnerable area. Strong unity in the brotherhood, unfeigned love, and fraternal fellowship among believers will cause us to rise above petty problems.

Solomon declared that "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Proverbs 18:19). Beware lest you offend and cause your brother or sister to stumble or err in his or her efforts to be saved. Only one sin is unpardonable: blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Matthew 12:31-32). All other sin can be forgiven, bringing reconciliation between God and humans. Someone has said, "The church is the only army that kills its wounded." May this never be our indictment; rather let us be strong and restore the erring.

NOTES:

## SAFEGUARDS FOR BELIEVERS

God has placed signs, directions, and guardrails along the route to heaven. He does not want one of us to fail in our effort for God. Below are four of the many safeguards God has given for our spiritual protection. If we had only these, they would enough to keep the sincere Christian from erring. Heed them and happiness will be yours.

- **The Ministry**—Your pastor and other ministers are your best friends when it comes to godly counsel and direction in times of failure. (See Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:7-19; Ephesians 4:8-14; II Timothy 2:24-26.)

- **The Holy Ghost**—God's Spirit in us is a powerful deterrent to error and sin; let the Spirit guide you. (See John 14:26; 15:26; I Corinthians 2:13; Titus 2:11-12.)

- **The Word of God**—Illumination for every situation is found in the Bible. Corrective measures for every conceivable problem are found within its holy pages; use it and practice its precepts. (See Ephesians 5:25-27; II Timothy 3:14-17; John 15:3.)

- **The Brethren**—As our brother's keeper, we need to bear the burdens of the erring and hurting among us. Providing a spiritual safety net for those whom Satan entices to fall is a needed ministry among believers. (See Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; I John 5:16-17.)

God has given us so much to prevent our being cut off from the true vine (John 15:1-11). Let us use every available resource to bear the fruit of the Spirit and stay out of error.

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## SUMMARY

All sin and unrighteousness is a breach of God's Word and will bring His displeasure. God wants us to be overcomers, to walk in the Spirit, to be spiritually minded, and not to err from truth.

Despite all the guidelines and safeguards, we often fall short of what God wants us to be. If a person continues and persists in the same sin over and over, never repenting and gaining victory, he will be eternally lost. Sin usually begets sin; therefore, an individual's spirituality declines when sin reigns in his life.

When a person fails God, becomes lukewarm, sins, or transgresses, that person can turn to God in repentance and be restored to fellowship with God. We are not cut off from fellowship with God unless we continue in, abide in, or live in a sinful manner without repenting and correcting our wrongs. Repenting to the extent we have sinned is the only measure that works. First, we go to God for forgiveness and then to others we may have wronged. God grants each of us both a repentant and a forgiving spirit.

**NOTES:**

Courage should arise in our hearts when we consider the following passages in the Word of the Lord:

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me" (Micah 7:8).

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand" (Psalm 37:23-24).

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**NOTES**

**LESSON 10**

**NOTES:**

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD

### JOB 23:12

Our faith, hope, and salvation are based upon Jesus Christ. And we learn of Him and come to believe in Him through the Bible. Therefore, we depend on the Bible as the only source of divine truth. Since this is so, we should thoroughly examine the Book in which we put so much trust. This lesson will present important facts concerning the Bible for study and memorization. Retain as many of the facts as possible as a witnessing tool when confirming the veracity of the Word of the Lord.

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## THE BIBLE

Other designations of the Scripture are equally as important as the following three, but these three are heard quite often.

1. Our word *Bible* comes from the Greek word *biblia*, which means *books*. Combined together these books make up *the Book* (Psalm 40:7; Hebrews 10:7). Therefore, the word *Bible* is a proper designation of the written, inspired Word of God. (See Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:12.)

2. *Scriptures* is from a Latin word meaning *the writings*. God often told people to "write" (Exodus 17:14; 34:27; Luke 1:1-4; Revelation 1:11) as they were moved on by the Holy Ghost. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in right-eousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

3. God's words have been preserved and delivered to humanity; therefore, the Bible is rightly called *the Word of God* (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).

Books are readily available in our society, but the book that should hold preeminence in our lives is the Bible.

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## FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. The Bible contains sixty-six books. Thirty-nine are in the Old Testament. Twenty-seven are in the New Testament.

**NOTES:**

2. There are 1,189 chapters, 31,173 verses, and 773,692 words in the Bible.

| Old Testament | New Testament |
|---|---|
| 929 chapters | 260 chapters |
| 23,214 verses | 7,959 verses |
| 592,439 words | 181,253 words |

3. There are at least, and possibly more than, thirty-six different writers of the Scriptures, who wrote on three continents: Africa, Asia, Europe. Their writings span over 1,500 years.

4. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew with a few small sections in Aramaic, while the New Testament was written in Greek.

5. When printing was invented in A.D. 1450, the Bible was the first book printed. It was previously copied by hand.

6. In A.D. 1250, Cardinal Hugo divided the Bible into chapters. In A.D. 1551, Sir Robert Stephens divided the Bible into verses.

Other pertinent facts are equally important; search them out and commit as many of them to memory as you can.

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## TRANSLATIONS

Many translations of the Bible are available today, thanks to modern scholarship. We can take our choice from the oldest translations to the latest condensed versions. Motivation, scholastic ability of the translators, and the manuscript text from which the translation comes are important factors. After years of investigation and study, I strongly recommend the use of the King James Version (also called the Authorized Version) of the Bible.

I think other translations should be used only after a thorough knowledge of the Bible is established. They should then be used for study and reference. Some modern translations, posing as helpful by clarifying older, archaic words, actually destroy truth and meaning contained in these words. Satan has always viciously attacked the Word of God through every devious means possible. Our day has not seen a slackening of the enemy's attack. Ink on paper under a cover labeled the Bible should not be the only criteria for which we look. Adherence to these few words of caution will be helpful in deciding on a good translation of the Bible.

**NOTES:**

## THE APOCRYPHA

One question you may encounter is, "Do you believe the Apocrypha is a part of the Bible?" Fourteen books are in the Apocrypha, and many people claim them to be inspired writings. The word *apocrypha* means hidden or secret. Protestants in general do not use these books or accept them as part of God's Word to humanity.

In the New Testament, there are 263 direct quotations and 370 allusions to passages in the Old Testament, but there is not one reference by Christ or the apostles to the Apocrypha. On April 8, 1546, at the Council of Trent, the pope officially declared the Apocrypha to be a part of the Bible.

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## ARE THERE ANY LOST BOOKS OF THE BIBLE?

In defending the Bible as a complete, infallible book, we will confront the question, "What about the lost books of the Bible?" This question usually refers to the following books mentioned, but not found, in the Bible.

1. Book of the Wars of the Lord (Numbers 21:14).
2. Book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13; II Samuel 1:18).
3. Book of the Acts of Solomon (I Kings 11:41).
4. Book of Nathan the Prophet (I Chronicles 29:29).
5. Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite (II Chronicles 9:29).
6. Book of Gad the Seer (I Chronicles 29:29).
7. Visions of Iddo the Seer (II Chronicles 9:29).
8. Book of Shemaiah the Prophet (II Chronicles 12:15).
9. Book of Jehu (II Chronicles 20:34).
10. Book of Samuel (I Chronicles 29:29).

Although the Bible mentions these ten different writings, it does not mean the Bible is incomplete. Many people wrote of the acts of God and people, and although their accounts may have been factual and true, God did not see fit to include them in the Bible. Just because someone spoke and wrote truth is not an indication that it must be a part of the Bible. No doubt the ten writings mentioned above did at one time exist, yet they are not necessary for us to have. God's Word is sufficient (1) to give us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3) and (2) to make us wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:16-17). What more do we need or could we ask for?

**NOTES:**

Biblical writers referred to various writings by others that are not a part of the Bible: (1) Paul quoted certain Greek poets, including one who said, "For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). We certainly do not need all the writings of these poets to make the Bible complete, even though Paul quoted from them. (2) Luke said, "Many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1). He was referring to writers other than those whose writings are in the New Testament. Because all their writings are not recorded for us does not invalidate one recorded verse of Scripture. In short, the Bible we do have is sufficient to bring us to the knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ (John 20:30-31).

God's Word needs no additions, deletions, or corrections; only our adherence and obedience to the revealed and recorded truth of the Bible is needed. There is no error, contradiction, or fallibility in the Bible. God's Word is complete, eternal, and totally trustworthy.

## DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

As a guide to a better understanding of the Bible, people have categorized the books into segments or divisions. Memorizing these categories will help you immensely.

### OLD TESTAMENT DIVISIONS

| Pentateuch | History | Poetry | Major Prophets | Minor Prophets |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Genesis | Joshua | Job | Isaiah | Hosea |
| Exodus | Judges | Psalms | Jeremiah | Joel |
| Leviticus | Ruth | Proverbs | Lamentations | Amos |
| Numbers | I Samuel | Ecclesiastes | Ezekiel | Obadiah |
| Deuteronomy | II Samuel | Song of | Daniel | Jonah |
| | I Kings | Solomon | | Micah |
| | II Kings | | | Nahum |
| | I Chronicles | | | Habakkuk |
| | II Chronicles | | | Zephaniah |
| | Ezra | | | Haggai |
| | Nehemiah | | | Zechariah |
| | Esther | | | Malachi |

**NOTES:**

**New Testament Divisions**

| Gospels | History | Epistles | Prophecy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Matthew<br>Mark<br>Luke<br>John | Acts | Romans<br>I Corinthians<br>II Corinthians<br>Galatians<br>Ephesians<br>Philippians<br>Colossians<br>I Thessalonians<br>II Thessalonians<br>I Timothy<br>II Timothy<br>Titus<br>Philemon<br>Hebrews<br>James<br>I Peter<br>II Peter<br>I John<br>II John<br>III John<br>Jude | Revelation |

## WHY WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN?

We could give many answers to this question, but I will include only four direct statements from the Bible. Add other thoughts to these as you study.

1. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13).

2. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

3. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Corinthians 10:11).

4. "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

**NOTES:**

Explore other statements from the Bible concerning why it was written. With your concordance and a good reference Bible this will be easily accomplished.

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## DESCRIPTIVE TITLES OF THE BIBLE

Ten synonymous, descriptive terms are given here to aptly describe the Word of God; add others as you study.

1. The Scripture (Mark 15:28; John 5:39; II Timothy 3:16).
2. The Oracles of God (Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12).
3. The Law of the Lord (Psalm 1:2).
4. The Books (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:12).
5. The Word of God (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).
6. The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).
7. The Covenants (Hebrews 8:6-7; also called *testament* in II Corinthians 3:6-14).
8. The Word of Life (John 6:63, 68; Philippians 2:16).
9. The Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).
10. The Word of Faith (Romans 10:8).

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## SYMBOLS OF THE BIBLE

Symbols are used to describe what the Bible is like. We often hear such terms as a minister teaches or preaches God's Word. Committing them to memory will make what you hear more meaningful.

1. Lamp and light (Psalm 119:105, 130; Proverbs 6:23).
2. Mirror (James 1:25).
3. Food (Job 23:12).

    a. Milk (I Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12-14; I Peter 2:2).
    b. Bread (Deuteronomy 8:3; Isaiah 55:10; Matthew 4:4).

**NOTES:**

c. Meat (I Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12-14).
d. Honey (Psalm 19:10; 119:103).

4. Gold (Psalm 19:10).

5. Fire (Jeremiah 20:9; 23:29).

6. Hammer (Jeremiah 23:29).

7. Sword (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).

8. Seed (Isaiah 55:10; Luke 8:11; I Peter 1:23).

9. Rain and snow (Isaiah 55:10-11).

10. Laver (Ephesians 5:26). The Old Testament priests washed at the laver before entering the tabernacle. This is a type of the Word of God cleansing us today (John 15:3).

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## THE USE OF THE BIBLE

In relation to truth, we need four essentials. God has provided all of them for us through the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16). We profit tremendously when we use God's Word for its designated purpose in our lives.

- **For Doctrine—**We are to use the Word of the Lord to teach, instruct, and direct us in settled Bible truths. We are without foundation if we have no established doctrinal teachings on salvation and holy living. (See Deuteronomy 32:2; Isaiah 28:9; Matthew 7:28; John 7:16; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:14; I Timothy 4:13-16.)

- **For Reproof**—We are to use the Bible for evidence and as a means of admonishing, showing a fault, or rebuking us. (See Proverbs 1:23-30; 10:17; 15:5, 10, 32; Hebrews 11:1-3; II Timothy 4:2; Ephesians 5:11.)

- **For Correction—**God's Word corrects false theories, restores things to their proper use, and corrects matters arising in the believer's life and in the church. (See Job 5:17; Proverbs 3:11-12; Jeremiah 2:30; 5:1-3; 7:28; Hebrews 12:6-11.)

- **For Instruction in Righteousness—**God's Word schools us in righteousness, it perfects (matures) us, and it instructs us how to live. (See II Kings 12:1-2; Proverbs 6:23; 15:32; Matthew 13:52; Acts 18:24-28; II Timothy 2:25.)

**NOTES:**

## THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

The power of the Word of God is indescribable. No word or phrase devised by humans could sufficiently reveal the power of the written Word. The following examples of what happens when we use the Word of God best describe the power of the Word. The Word of the Lord is powerful in the following areas, along with many others:

- **To Defeat Satan**—Jesus, in His temptation, defeated Satan on every point by quoting Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11). Three times during His temptation Jesus declared, "It is written." The written Word is our most powerful force to defeat Satan. (See Deuteronomy 8:3.)

- **To Withstand Evil**—not only in our personal lives but also universally. Satan would destroy each individual believer and bring chaos to the universe if possible. God upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). When God decrees or commands something, it is performed by the power of His word.

Almighty God has made, or will make, five decrees affecting creation, the universe, and humanity. Study them to clarify this statement.

1. The worlds were framed by the decree of God. (See Acts 14:15; Hebrews 11:3; II Peter 3:5; Revelation 10:6.)

2. The flood of Noah's day came by God's decree. (See Genesis 6:5-7, 12; II Peter 3:3-7).

3. The world is presently under God's decree of reservation, which holds it in its present state until the Day of Judgment. (See II Peter 3:3-7.)

4. When God chooses, this present earth will be burned up at His divine decree or word (II Peter 3:3-12).

5. When this present universe is destroyed by fire, God will decree a new heaven and earth (II Peter 3:3-14).

- **To Change a Person**—David gave us an unusually powerful insight into what God's Word can do in the life of an individual. (See Psalm 19:7-11.) He identified the Word, explained why it can change us, and explained what it accomplishes in our lives.

**NOTES:**

| What the Word of God Is | Why It Can Change Us | What It Does to Us |
|---|---|---|
| Law of the LORD | Is perfect | Converts the soul |
| Testimony of the LORD | Is sure | Makes wise the simple |
| Statutes of the LORD | Is right | Rejoices the heart |
| Commandment of the LORD | Is pure | Enlightens the eyes |

- **As a Weapon**—The Bible is God's thoughts and ways expressed to us in written form. (See Isaiah 55:6-11.) Through the power of God's Word, we can please God and defeat Satan; it is the only *visible* part of our armor, but it is one of our greatest weapons against Satan.

  1. Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).

  2. Weapons of our warfare (II Corinthians 10:4-5).

  3. Sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12).

  4. Instructs us what to think on (Philippians 4:8).

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Teach God's Word to your family and friends and commit much of it to memory. Try to read the Bible through within the next twelve months. You can accomplish this by reading approximately fifteen minutes a day. Messages and thoughts relating to the Bible are inexhaustible; study and apply His Word to your life.

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**NOTES**

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**LESSON 11**

NOTES:

# HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE SYSTEMATICALLY

## II TIMOTHY 2:15; 3:13-17

Often heard from believers and unbelievers alike are statements or questions such as, "I don't know how to study the Bible" or "How do I study the Bible?" In answer to these inquiries, I will share some personal methods and ideas to help accomplish the desired goal of successful Bible study. These ideas are not offered as the last word on the subject, but rather as a motivational tool to help you on your way.

God tells us to study His Word (II Timothy 2:15). *Study* in this verse comes from a Greek word meaning to use speed, make effort, be prompt, earnest, give diligence, endeavor, and labor. If we are to learn and excel, we must exercise discipline and give the Bible priority. Casual reading, skipping from place to place, or nonmeditative and disrupted study will never produce the needed knowledge of God's Word. Dig deep (Luke 6:48), build upon the sure foundation, and then the wind, rain, and flood will not destroy what you build.

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## TOOLS NEEDED

We spend hard-earned money for tools for other types of work to make the job easier and faster. Why not have good tools for this most important task? Beginning at point 1, as you have funds, purchase books in the following suggested order. This list is somewhat progressive in both cost and depth of material.

1. **A Good Bible—**I recommend that you purchase a well-made, durable King James Version (Authorized Version) of the Bible for study. Thompson Chain, Scofield (1917 edition), Cambridge, Nave's, and Oxford Bibles are all good choices.

2. **Halley's Bible Handbook**

3. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**

4. **Bible Dictionary** (one volume)

5. **Webster's Dictionary**

6. **Commentaries**—Matthew Henry or Adam Clarke (these are five- or six-volume sets, according to the publisher).

7. **The International Standard Encyclopedia**—This is a five-volume set.

**NOTES:**

8. **Church History**—Begin with a one-volume book, then advance to a multi-volume set, such as *History of the Christian Church* by Philip Schaff.

9. **Bible Dictionary**—*Hastings* or *Smith's* multi-volume sets.

10. **Word Studies**—*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* by Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the New Testament* by Marvin Vincent, and *Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies* are all good word study books and are easily understood.

11. **The Pulpit Commentary** and **Barnes' Notes on the Old and New Testaments**—are both multi-volume sets that are quite expensive, but they are well worth the investment.

Begin now with what you have, then purchase other helps as money becomes available. Make purchasing good books a priority investment. Many other good books are available; these are basic and reliable for study.

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## MARKING YOUR BIBLE

Underscoring favorite passages in your Bible is a real aid to memorization. Writing in the margins and blank spaces on the pages is a good way to record thoughts, sermon titles, and Scripture references you do not want to lose. Symbols, colored markers, and other systematic methods can be used to highlight important or doctrinal passages.

Marking in your Bible is not a sign of disrespect or an attempt to add to or take away from the Bible. Actually it is a sign of care, love, and study of God's Word.

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## A QUIET PLACE FOR STUDY

Any serious student of the Word should have a secluded place for study. If you are a teacher, church worker, or aspiring minister, the need is even greater for you. It is impossible to learn properly, ingest, and assimilate what you are reading with distractions taking place. Stereos, tape players, radios, and telephones should be stopped while you study if possible. Prime time must be given to study, not just a few hurried minutes when you are tired and preparing for bed. This is fine for relaxed reading but insufficient for the true learning process.

**NOTES:**

## WHY SHOULD WE STUDY?

God's Word is a life-giving sustenance proceeding from the mouth of God. (See Deuteronomy 8:3; Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 4:4.) Dare we neglect such an important facet of our spiritual existence? Many reasons for study abound; perhaps the following will point out the real need for personal study in your life.

1. **It approves us to God**—Study makes us unashamed, approves us to God, shows we are a workman, and enables us to rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).

2. **It equips us with answers**—This study course is prepared for this express purpose—to equip us with answers to give others a reason of the hope that is within us (I Peter 3:15). (See Colossians 4:6.)

3. **It arms us with the sword of the Spirit**—Taking the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) means more than having a Bible in our hand. Implied in this passage is the hiding of the Word in our heart and mind for recall in times of need or temptation. (See Matthew 4:1-11.) The psalmist hid God's Word in his heart so that he would not sin against God (Psalm 119:11).

4. **Because of the structure of the Bible**—Scripture must be used to explain Scripture, harmonizing in context with related passages. Lines and precepts must be brought together from "here" and "there" in continuity and harmony (Isaiah 28:9-13). Study this passage closely along with the following definitions of words it uses.

   - **Line**—a cord, as connecting, especially for measuring; a rule.

   - **Precept**—an injunction, commandment, mandate, authoritative prescription.

   - **Here a little, there a little**—denotes incompleteness of the subject in one particular setting; other pertinent facts apply from other places in the Bible. Each subject is complete and entire when the student fully seeks it out.

   By and large the Bible is in literal language and is to be taken literally. Symbolic language does exist in the Scriptures; therefore, we must study to discern between the two. Making passages symbolic when they are literal is deceptive and destructive, and vice versa.

5. **It develops skillfulness and qualifies us to teach**—Skillful artisans in the Scriptures are sorely needed, both in the local assembly and in the full-time ministry. Lacking studiousness in the Word is a glaring disqualification for anyone who desires to teach others (II Timothy 2:2). Advancement from milk to meat is essential if we are to be skillful in the Word of Truth (Hebrews 5:12-14). Failing to move from the milk of the Word to the meat of the Word denotes the following things:

**NOTES:**

a. We are still a babe (I Peter 2:2).

b. We are unskillful in the word of righteousness (Hebrews 5:13).

c. We need someone to teach us (Hebrews 5:12).

d. We are carnal rather than spiritual (I Corinthians 3:1-3).

e. We have not exercised our senses to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

Paul, after being driven out of Thessalonica, went to Berea and found people so hungry for truth that they searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:10-11). May God make us modern-day Bereans!

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## METHODS, FORMS, AND TYPES OF STUDY

Developing a personal methodology of study is important. Usually this will develop through trial and error, but tapping into the methods of others can be both time saving and helpful. Ways and means are legion; perhaps these will assist you in honing your study skills and habits.

1. **Listening**—As elementary as this may sound, an open ear can result in the acquiring of a wealth of knowledge.

   a. Discussing the Bible with others and making mental and written notes of the discussion help tremendously.

   b. Listening to tapes of sermons, teaching, and Bible reading is helpful. Use traveling time for this if you have a cassette player.

   c. Teaching and preaching by your pastor and other ministers enhance your knowledge of the Bible.

   d. Heeding what we hear is essential (Hebrews 2:1-3).

2. **Reading**—Read the Bible through in one year or less if you are serious about study. Resource material is available. Buy, borrow, trade, or check books out of the library, but by all means, you must be a reader to learn.

3. **Memorizing**—Knowledge can be acquired and retained if we will discipline ourselves to commit important facts and verses to memory. The following are some suggestions for memory work:

   a. Key verses on doctrine, holiness, faith, and so on.

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b. Entire chapters such as Psalm 23, I Corinthians 13, Hebrews 11, and so on.

c. The books of the Bible and their correct spelling.

d. The twelve apostles' names.

e. The Beatitudes.

f. The fruit of the Spirit.

g. The gifts of the Spirit.

4. **Analyzing Topics**—Choose a particular subject of interest and exhaust every resource until you know and understand the subject well. The following are suggested topics for study:

   a. Doctrine—Know what you believe and why you believe it.

   b. History—Study church, secular, and Bible history.

   c. Prophecy—Study prophecies that have been fulfilled and those that have not.

   d. Life of Christ—Know His journeys, miracles, questions asked and answered, and so on.

   e. Maps and geography—Find on a map the place you are reading about.

   f. Chronology of Scripture—Understanding dates, times, and the sequence of events is important.

   g. Tabernacle—Know its dimensions, material, purpose, and so on.

   h. Genealogy—Studying the backgrounds of individuals is an interesting topic.

   i. Word studies—The origin, meaning, and pronunciation of words is important.

   j. Chart studies—Many are available and enlightening.

   k. Examples (Hebrews 8:5), shadows (Colossians 2:17), types (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1), figures (Hebrews 9:9), allegories (Galatians 4:22-31), and patterns (Hebrews 9:23) provide interesting study topics.

5. **Studying Cross-References**—Compare Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is its own best commentary. A concordance and good reference Bible used properly will open a wealth of knowledge to you.

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6. **Outlining**—Write notes in outline form of what you learn. I always keep blank note paper in my Bible, and when a worthy thought comes to me, I write it down. After you have accumulated dates, locations, personalities, and other pertinent material relating to the subject, make an outline. Writing reinforces the learning process and aids in memorization.

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## FORMS OF THE WORD

God's Word takes on many different forms in order to equip the student with needed resources. God is interested in our productivity and completion. His Word "throughly furnishe[s] [us] unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:14-17). Developmental stages of growth demand various forms of the Word. God has provided every needed form for us.

- **Water Form**—For initial and continual cleansing and purification (John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26).
- **Light Form**—Provides illumination for unbeliever and believer alike (Psalm 119:105, 130).
- **Meat Form**—For mature Christians; produces spirituality (I Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14).
- **Sword Form**—Serves as a weapon in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).
- **Milk Form**—Produces growth for babes in Christ. It is to be used temporarily in this form (I Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14; I Peter 2:2).
- **Seed Form**—Reproductive powers lie within the Word (Psalm 126:6; Luke 8:11; I Peter 1:23).

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## SPECIAL SECTION FOR MINISTERS AND TEACHERS

Preparing lessons or sermons for presentation may be your responsibility. If so, you are always searching for quality thoughts, ideas, and subjects to use. The will of God for the occasion is important to all concerned. To arrive at all this simultaneously can be perplexing. Below is a brief step-by-step process through which you can arrive at your goal.

1. **THE WILL OF GOD**

   a. By strong impression or conviction you may know the will of God for the service you are to speak in. If so, pursue your subject diligently and speak as God directs.

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b. If the will of God is unknown to you for the service in which you are to speak, let the following guide you. (1) Consider the *type* of service you are speaking in. For instance, if it is a men's meeting, you will need something directed to men. In short, choose topics appropriate for the occasion. (2) Meditate on the type of meeting you will be speaking in. (3) Spend time in prayer. (4) Go to your resource material, including books, notes, and past messages. Through this process, God will open up thoughts to you that are applicable to the occasion. Much time may be needed—do not rush.

2. **HOW TO OBTAIN THOUGHTS AND TOPICS**

a. Keep note paper handy, and write thoughts and topics down.

b. Through prayer God will drop thoughts into our minds and hearts.

c. Magazines

d. Newspapers

e. Bible reading

f. Sermons and Bible studies you have heard or preached

g. Commentaries

h. Meditation

i. Billboards

j. Tapes

3. **HOW TO DEVELOP A LESSON OR MESSAGE**

a. When you have a topic in mind, add thoughts, in any order, as they come to you.

b. Use your concordance to look up all verses of Scripture on the subject.

c. Cross-reference every verse from your reference Bible.

d. Look up word meanings—Greek, Hebrew, and English—and write them down. Pronounce aloud words that are hard for you to pronounce; do not wait to practice on the congregation.

e. Sit and meditate, think on your subject, inject personal experiences and anecdotes.

f. Stop and pray if you feel defeated or if you are at a dead end.

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g. Take all your notes, word meanings, and illustrations and arrange them in an orderly fashion on your permanent note paper.

h. Keep all permanent notes for future reference.

4. **PRESENTATION OF THE MESSAGE OR LESSON**

a. Present your message with enthusiasm and conviction.

b. Use sobriety or joy as the occasion calls for.

c. Be in prayer and meditation before you present your message.

d. Present your thoughts with confidence, faith, and assurance.

e. Do not let the devil sidetrack you. You have studied diligently; now make it worthwhile to the listeners.

f. Speak clearly, let God anoint you, and do not try to impress the crowd with your importance. The power is in the Word, not you.

g. Dress neatly and properly for the occasion.

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Study is essential to Christian growth and development. Never become neglectful or discouraged because you do not learn everything overnight. Keep working; the rewards are innumerable and indescribable. Develop good study habits early in your Christian walk. Happy studying!

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## TRIBUTE TO THE BIBLE

(Author unknown)

It is the book that reveals the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts binding, its histories true, and its decisions immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. The Bible contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject; our good is its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill your memory, rule your heart, and guide your feet in righteousness and true holiness. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully, meditatively, searchingly, devotionally, and study it constantly, perseveringly, and industriously. Read it through and through until it becomes part of your being and generates faith that will move mountains. The Bible is a mine of wealth, the source of health, and a world of pleasure. It is given to you in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and will stand

forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the least to the greatest of labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

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**LESSON 12**

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# WHAT IS PRAYER?

## MATTHEW 6:5-15; LUKE 11:1-13

Prayer is one of the highest privileges afforded the saint, whether newborn or a veteran of many years. Since God's people are a praying people, we would do well to know what prayer is and why we pray, and then be able to share with others the "whys" of prayer.

God's house has been designated as a "house of prayer." His Word is filled with many and varied prayers, emanating from both the righteous and the wicked. God is a prayer-answering God, and His Word instructs us to offer prayers to Him. Since this is the case, the question of our lesson arises: "What is Prayer?"

Some years ago, I discovered in my studies the following poem that so aptly answers the question at hand.

### WHAT IS PRAYER?

(Montgomery)

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Unuttered or expressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the heart;
Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward gleaming of an eye
When none but God is near.
Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.
Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death.
He enters heaven by prayer.
Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels rejoice
And say, "Behold, he prays!"

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The saints in prayer appear as one,
In word, in deed, in mind,
When with Jesus Christ
His fellowship they find.
No prayer is made on earth alone;
The Holy Spirit pleads.
And Jesus on the eternal throne,
For sinners intercedes.
O Thou, by whom we come to God!
The Life, the Truth, the Way.
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray!

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We need to explore, investigate, and discover what prayer really is. Life's greatest privilege is the right to use the name of Jesus Christ in prayer. Oh, the power that resides in the spoken name of Jesus Christ as we call upon Him in sincere prayer!

Prayer is the offering of thanksgiving, needs, and desires to God in faith, with the petition being in harmony with the teaching of God's Word concerning prayer.

Our most sincere prayer should be, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

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## DO WE NEED TO PRAY?

If any doubt fills your mind concerning whether or not you should pray, perhaps these verses will answer your question:

1. "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Timothy 2:8).

2. "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

3. "After this manner therefore pray ye" (Matthew 6:9; see verses 5-13).

4. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).

5. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16; see verses 13-16).

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6. "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12).

7. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (I Peter 4:7).

8. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

9. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us" (Colossians 4:2-3).

10. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

Our Lord set an example for us in prayer. Jesus Christ did not pray as God. As a genuine man, however, He prayed to God the Father. In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). This was not one God praying to another God, but the man Christ Jesus praying to the Spirit. What a pattern Jesus set for us in prayer! (See Matthew 14:23; 26:39-44; Luke 6:12; Hebrews 5:7.)

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## SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS

This section could be entitled "The Lord's Prayer Request," since it describes things the Lord wants us us to pray about. Most of our praying is for our needs and the needs of others. Out of obedience and courtesy to our Lord, let us fulfill His requests. We will be blessed along with others when we do so.

1. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

2. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

3. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16).

4. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

5. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2:1-2).

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6. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

7. "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret" (I Corinthians 14:13). Anyone whom God uses in a church service through the spiritual gift of speaking with tongues to address the congregation should pray for the spiritual gift of the interpretation of tongues. For more details on this point, go to the lesson "Speaking with Tongues" in this manual.

These are specific instructions on what to pray for and about. Our personal needs along with the above will keep our prayer life full and exciting.

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## THE EXTENT OF PRAYER

Prayer is far reaching; it enables us to go into areas impenetrable by other forces. We can scale spiritual heights through prayer.

Practice, prevail, and persevere until you achieve and attain what God has promised. Notice what prayer can do and where it can take you.

1. We can come before the throne of grace and there obtain mercy and grace to help in the time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22).

2. Through prayer we seek first the kingdom of God, rather than other things (Matthew 6:33).

3. We should persevere in our praying. (See Daniel 10:1-3; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-7; Ephesians 6:18.)

4. Repentance takes place through prayer and causes the angels of heaven to rejoice (Luke 15:7-10). Prayer does not necessarily complete our repentance, though it certainly begins with prayer. Often we must go to individuals to ask their forgiveness if we have wronged them, but prayer is certainly essential to repentance. (See Matthew 6:12; Luke 18:13; I John 2:1-2.)

5. Prayer may also include praying in an unknown tongue. (See I Corinthians 14:14-15.) Not all praying is done in this manner; some is to be done with the understanding, that is, in our native tongue. When we pray in tongues, the understanding is unfruitful, but our spirit is strengthened and edified. Praying in the Holy Ghost is a needed form of intercessory prayer among believers (Jude 20; Romans 8:26-34).

6. We present our bodies a living sacrifice through prayer (Romans 12:1-2). Here we find, pursue, and understand the will of God for our individual lives.

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7. When taking upon the whole armor of God, we are also enjoined to pray (Ephesians 6:13-18). This armor cannot be supplied to us or appropriated to us without prayer. We can only put on, and keep on, the armor of God through prayer. In prayer we learn to walk in the Spirit and to conquer the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17; II Corinthians 10:3-5).

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## INDIVIDUAL WORK

Using your *Strong's Concordance* or a *Webster's Dictionary,* look up the meaning of the following words as they relate to prayer. Write the definition.

- *Petition:*
- *Supplication:*
- *Prayer:*
- *Request:*
- *Thanksgiving:*
- *Watching:*
- *Intercession:*

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## THE POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer's awesome power is inexplicable. The following examples should bolster our faith to believe God and to pray unceasingly. Prayer is effective:

1. To heal the sick (James 5:13-16).
2. To sanctify our food (I Timothy 4:4-5).
3. To unlock prisons (Acts 12:1-9; 16:25-26).
4. To cast out demons (Matthew 17:14-21).
5. To find salvation (Acts 10:1-22, 44-48).
6. To turn back the judgment of God (Genesis 18:22-33; 19:29; Exodus 32:7-14).
7. To give children to barren mothers (I Samuel 1:10-28; 2:1-11).

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8. To give rain after it is withheld (James 5:17-18).

9. To help in time of problems (I Samuel 8:1-9).

10. To extend life (Isaiah 38:1-8).

Amazing incidents abound in God's Word on the subject of answered prayer. The Bible records at least 650. Study them, pattern your prayers after them, and God will answer you just as He did others.

Every Christian needs to develop a consistent, faithful pattern of prayer. Contrary to popular opinion, prayer does not come easy. Learn through discipline to pray lengthy prayers—not vain repetition but sincere prayers. Learning how to pray and being taught by the Word and Spirit on how to pray should be a priority. There is a secret place of the Most High (Psalm 91:1); it is found in the closet of prayer.

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## PRAYER AND ITS CONNECTIVES

Connective tissues bind our physical bodies together to keep them strong. There are connectives to prayer that make it strong and effective. Without them prayer becomes powerless and weak. Offered with its connectives, prayer becomes a most powerful force in the life of a Christian. Some of these connectives are as follows.

- **Prayer and Obedience**—Disobedience to God and His Word destroys the desired results of our prayers. Obedience to God is a key to answered prayer. (See Acts 9:1-20; 10:1-8, 30-33, 44-48.)

- **Prayer and the Armor of God**—An inseparable bond exists between prayer and spiritual armor; the armor is effective through prayer. (See Ephesians 6:10-18.)

- **Prayer and Faith**—Doubt will reduce the most sincere prayer to an ineffectual request. It is the prayer of faith that saves the sick (James 5:14-18). Faith coupled with prayer can move mountains and accomplish the impossible. (See Matthew 21:21-22; Mark 9:19-27; 11:22-24.)

- **Prayer and Persistence**—So often we pray briefly and without persistence, manifesting to God the unimportance of the request. Continual asking is important and biblical. (See Daniel 10:1-14; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-7.)

  1. **Pray without Ceasing**—I Samuel 12:23; Acts 12:5; Romans 1:9; Colossians 1:9; I Thessalonians 5:17; II Timothy 1:3.

  2. **Pray Repetitively**—We are forbidden to engage in *vain repetition*, that is, saying the same things over and over insincerely for the sake of making

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long prayers. However, Jesus prayed three times in one night and said the same thing each time (Matthew 26:36-44). Elijah prayed seven times in succession for rain (I Kings 18:41-46; James 5:18). Asking repetitively for something is not wrong if we are sincere; it is the will of God.

3. **Pray Earnestly**—Luke 22:39-46; James 5:17-18.

4. **Pray Fervently**—"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

   a. *Effectual* is from a Greek word meaning to be active, efficient, or be mighty in.

   b. *Fervent* is from a Greek word meaning heat, zeal, and ardor.

   c. *Availeth* is from a Greek word meaning forceful, capable, having strength and power.

- **Prayer and Fasting**—Fasting is a powerful ally of prayer. Special things are accomplished when these two are used simultaneously. (See Mark 9:29; Luke 2:37; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23.)

- **Prayer and Forgiveness**—An unforgiving spirit actually hinders and stops our prayers. Forgiveness must emanate from the heart while we pray (Mark 11:25-26; Matthew 18:23-35).

Prayer is one of our highest privileges and one of the most effective forces in our lives. Applying and using the proper connectives will bring amazing results. Our generation needs men and women who know *how* to pray and who *will* pray. As people of God, may we join together in effectual, fervent prayer.

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**LESSON 13**

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# IMPORTUNITY IN PRAYER

## LUKE 11:1-13

One of the most valuable lessons we can learn about prayer is that importunity plays a key role in obtaining answers.

- **Importunity**—means shameless persistence in requesting or demanding.

* **Importunate**—means to be troublesome, to trouble with request or demands, to ask for urgently.

Being persistent and unrelenting for wrong things accomplishes nothing with God. There is a *manner* (a way or method) of prayer. (See Matthew 6:9.) It is essential for us to eradicate hindering elements from our prayers if we want great things from God. Before exploring importunity in prayer, let us discuss hindrances that we should remove from our lives.

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## HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

When we remove these known hindrances, we are ready to persist and persevere in prayer until the answer comes. Write down other things, in addition to these, that you feel hinder your prayer life, and then work to remove them.

1. **Improper Husband/Wife Relationship**—Contention, strife, and disharmony in a home affect one's prayers (I Peter 3:7).

2. **Sin in Our Lives**—Being hypocritical or actively engaging in sinful practices and never repenting will stop the answer to our prayers. (See Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18.)

3. **Not Asking according to God's Will**—God's will in this context is His Word. Neither are we to ask God for things contrary to His will for our personal lives. We must consider His Word and His plan for our lives when we pray. (See I John 5:14-15; Romans 8:27.)

4. **Wavering**—James said to not be double-minded, doubt, be hesitant, or stagger at God's promises when we pray. Ask in faith, without doubting, and the answer will come (James 1:5-8).

5. **Unbelief**—Doubt is one of the biggest hindrances we have to fight in our prayer lives. (See Mark 9:23; 11:23-26; Hebrews 11:6.)

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6. **Unforgiveness**—Forgiveness must emanate from our hearts while we are praying; failure to forgive hinders our prayers. (See Matthew 18:35; Mark 11:23-26.)

7. **Failure to Use the Name of Jesus**—All power in heaven and earth is in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18). His titles and attributes are good to call in prayer, but we should never forget that the power is in the name of Jesus Christ, when we call on Him in faith (John 14:12-14).

8. **Not Asking or Asking Amiss**—The word *amiss* means unbecoming, not befitting, incorrect, and wrong. Some never ask; therefore, no answers come. Others ask, but for a wrong purpose (James 4:3). (See Matthew 7:7-8; James 4:4-10.)

9. **Disobedience to God's Word**—Keeping His commandments is essential if we expect God to continue to answer our prayers (I John 3:19-22).

10. **Unthankfulness**—Failure to be thankful for past and present blessings can stop the flow of future blessings. (See Ephesians 5:4, 20; Philippians 4:6.)

11. **Lack of Power with God**—Prayer is a generator of power in our lives. There is no lack on God's part when it comes to power, but for His power to work in our lives we must continue to pray and to walk in the Spirit. (See Acts 1:8; Ephesians 3:20; 6:10.)

12. **Improper Motives**—Praying to be seen of people, using vain repetitions, and trying to be heard through much speaking are improper motives. If we have the proper motives when asking God for things, the answer will come. (See Matthew 6:5-8.)

Physical weariness, discouragement, and stress are also hindrances to prayer. Zero in on your problem and correct it, and you will receive great things from God through prayer.

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## THE IMPORTUNITY FACTOR IN PRAYER

*Prayers made* and *prayers answered* are two vastly different things. God wants to bless us, to give people the Holy Ghost, and to supply our needs, but there is a biblical principle of importunity in prayer. Labor- and time-saving devices applicable to other projects never apply to prayer. Praying is enjoyable and rewarding, but it is also hard work and taxing to the flesh. Never should we feel repulsed when we do not get the desired results in prayer. Being timid, bashful, or easily discouraged in prayer will not bring needed answers. Unabashed determination and stamina are necessary for opening heaven's doors.

We are time conscious since our time is measured in terms of dollars and cents. As a

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result our busy, rushed society has reduced prayer time to pitiful proportions. Oh, for a fresh awakening to the value of time spent in prayer! Its rewards surpass the highest compensations humans can pay. If you are discouraged with your prayer life, perhaps these examples will inspire you to go to God again and again until the answer comes.

- **Example of the Three Loaves**—This example teaches us *how* to pray in relation to persistence. In this case the *friendship factor* did not work but the *importunity factor* did (Luke 11:1-13). God is our dearest friend, but what friendship will not produce, importunity will.

- **The Unjust Judge**—God, our Judge, is just. If a widow could move the heart of an unjust judge with persistence, what can we do with our God using the same method? (Luke 18:1-18).

- **Syrophenician Woman**—What a story! An outsider, a Gentile, made such an impact on the Master with her unabashed request on behalf of her daughter that Jesus just could not say no (Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 15:21-28).

- **Cornelius**—The commentary on his life is that he prayed to God always. Cornelius offered up so many prayers that they mounted up as a memorial before God (Acts 10:1-48). God answers faithful prayers.

- **The Apostle Peter in Prison**—"Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts 12:5). The church today can use this key to receive answers to prayer. (See Acts 12:1-19.)

- **Daniel**—Twenty-one days of prayer and fasting were necessary before Daniel received an answer to his prayer (Daniel 10:1-21). The prince of Persia, Satan's emissary, hindered the angel of God on his way with the answer for Daniel. Delayed prayers for us could be caused by the same situation.

## PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

Unceasing, prevailing, intercessory prayers can change the following:

1. **Us—**Prayer alters our attitudes, spirits, and conduct to align them with God's Word. Study the effect of prayer upon these individuals when they prayed.

   a. Peter (Acts 10:1-23).

   b. The Publican (Luke 18:9-14).

   c. Saul (Acts 9:11).

   d. Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:1-8).

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e. Job (Job 42:7-10).

f. Jonah (Jonah 2:1-10).

2. **God—**God's eternal purpose is unchangeable, but through prayer, God has been moved to extend mercy when He was ready to pour out wrath. What mercy we could obtain for ourselves and for others if we would pray without ceasing! (See Genesis 18:16-33; Exodus 32:7-14; Numbers 14:11-20.)

3. **Others—**Intercessory prayer for those who will not or cannot pray can affect them dramatically. When we pray for others, things can change in the life of the person for whom we pray. Here are instances of prayer having results for someone else.

   a. Peter (Acts 12:1-19).

   b. The sick (James 5:14-16).

   c. Those who despitefully use us (Matthew 5:44).

   d. Laborers who are sent into the harvest (Matthew 9:37-38).

Our world needs a soul-saving revival that only God can give us. Let us unite our faith, harmonize our efforts, and persevere in prayer until it comes. If we pursue *opportunities* but neglect *importunity*, our world will sink deeper in sin. May God grant us a revival of prayer!

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## IMPORTUNITY PRAYER CHART

Studying this lesson in conjunction with this chart will give you a healthy overview of the biblical structure through which God answers prayer. Armed with this knowledge, we can become more proficient and effective in our prayer lives. *Pray-ers* may die, but *prayers* never die.

**NOTES:**

| Prayer Made | Importunity | Prayer Answered | Scripture |
|---|---|---|---|
| Knocking | Continually | Opened | Matthew 7:7-11 |
| Prayer made | Unceasing to God | Peter set free | Acts 12:1-19 |
| Enter prayer closet | Wait on God | Rewarded openly | Matthew 6:5-8 |
| Ask | Persevere | It shall be given | Matthew 7:1-11 |
| Loaves asked for | Importunity | Loaves received | Luke 11:1-13 |
| Desire Holy Ghost | Keep asking | Spirit given | Luke 11:13 |
| Seek | Unceasing | You shall find | Matthew 7:7-11 |
| Avenge me | Continual coming | Avenged | Luke 18:1-8 |
| Healing desired | Cried after Him | Healing for child | Matthew 15:21-28 |
| Cornelius | Prayed always | Received Holy Ghost | Acts 10:1-48 |
| Daniel | Twenty-one days | Answer came | Daniel 10:1-21 |
| Jacob | Wrestled all night | Touched by God | Genesis 32:24-32 |

It is in the arena of importunity that we wage our personal battle before an answer comes from God. Too many prayers break down at this juncture. After we pray, we prevail or fail. Abandoned prayers are unanswered prayers.

The task is not easy. May God grant us stamina and strength to persevere in prayer until we find healing, encouragement, salvation, or whatever we need.

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**LESSON 14**

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# FASTING

## MATTHEW 6:16-18; 9:14-17

Fasting is one of the most powerful and effective forces we can employ against the enemy. Fasting solidifies the Christian's life into one of productivity and fruitfulness. Rewards accompanying fasting are numerous; we will cover only a few due to space limitations.

A goal of this lesson is to point out the importance, effectiveness, and necessity of fasting. Biblical examples emphasize the need for us to make fasting a practice. We can accomplish things through fasting that nothing else will accomplish. We can win victory, receive power, and obtain deliverance through prayer and fasting.

The fall of humanity came about when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:6). The human race plunged into sin because of this act of disobedience, and until this day, its influences have a hold upon us. It is strange that humans would fall through eating—a natural reaction to the untaught, unlearned, inborn sensation of hunger. Stranger still is the connection between excessive eating and drinking and indulgence in sin. Noah's day was filled with eating, drinking, and other vices, so much so until the Flood took that generation away (Matthew 24:36-39). One of Sodom and Gomorrah's blinding problems, along with immoral practices, was *fullness of bread* (Ezekiel 16:49). Paul revealed the snare of Israel in that they sat down to eat and drink and rose up to indulge in revelry (I Corinthians 10:7). Paul also stated that if there were no resurrection, we should just eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we would die (I Corinthians 15:32).

Rest assured, there is a resurrection of the dead; therefore, it behooves us to guard against the excesses of Noah's and Lot's day. From Christ's teaching it appears that history is destined to repeat itself in this area. (See Luke 17:26-29.) In light of this warning fasting is an important means of helping us to temper our physical desires. Simultaneously we will receive spiritual power when we fast.

Certainly no one would condemn the legitimate practice of eating and drinking. The problem is that excesses abound due to a lack of discipline. May God use this lesson to renew the scriptural discipline of fasting in our lives.

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## JESUS' ANSWER TO JOHN'S DISCIPLES CONCERNING FASTING

The disciples of John the Baptist questioned Jesus concerning fasting (Matthew 9:14-17). They questioned why they fasted yet Jesus' disciples did not. Jesus answered them with three truths that we need to understand.

**NOTES:**

1. The children of the bride chamber do not fast while the bridegroom is with them.

2. A new piece of cloth is not sewn onto an old garment.

3. New wine is not put into old wineskins.

Jesus Christ was, and is, the Bridegroom. While He was here on earth with His disciples, it was not necessary for them to fast, but after He ascended into heaven, it became necessary for them to fast.

Jesus has ascended on high, and now we await the return of the Bridegroom for the church, which He will carry back to heaven to be with Him (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). His Spirit, the Holy Ghost, will quicken our mortal bodies to be raised up (Romans 8:11). Jesus had to go away before the Holy Ghost could come into our lives (John 14:26; 16:7-13), but such a powerful experience could not be contained in old garments and wineskins. The Holy Ghost needed renewed, regenerated vessels that He now provides. While we await the return of the Bridegroom, we must keep our vessels and lamps filled (Matthew 25:1-13). We do so through spiritual disciplines, of which fasting is a part.

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## OVERVIEW OF FASTING THROUGH THE AGES

The following list provides an overview of fasting from Old Testament times until eternity begins.

**Old Testament until John—**Fasting was a common practice throughout the Old Testament. For this reason, John's disciples could not understand why Jesus' disciples did not fast.

**During Jesus' Time—**Jesus, the Bridegroom, was present with His disciples; therefore, it was not necessary for them to fast at that time. This was only for a short time.

**Church Age—**The Bridegroom is gone, so we are commanded to fast in the New Testament.

**Millennium—**The Bridegroom will be with us, so we will not fast during this time.

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## WHAT IS FASTING?

1. *Webster's Dictionary* states that fasting means to keep from eating all or certain foods, to eat very little or nothing.

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2. *Fasting* comes from the Hebrew word *tsuwm*, meaning to cover the mouth, to fast.

3. The Greek word for fasting is *nestis*, which means not eating, to abstain from food.

Scripturally, fasting is not (1) a dieting process, (2) missing a meal or two because we are too rushed to eat, (3) being without food because we are too poor to buy it, (4) a hunger strike to get someone to do something, or (5) an act to obtain physical health. Although fasting is healthy, we fast for other reasons; health is a side benefit.

In short, fasting is doing without food in order to obtain spiritual discipline, strength, answers, and direction for ourselves and for others. It must be done unto God (Zechariah 7:5; Matthew 6:18).

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## TYPES OF FASTS

Arthur Wallis's outstanding book, *God's Chosen Fast*,[1] identifies three types of fasts:

- **The Normal Fast**—In this fast we abstain from food, but drink water. (See Matthew 4:1-2; Luke 4:2.)

- **The Absolute Fast—**During this fast we abstain from both food and water. (See Ezra 10:6; Acts 9:9.) For health and safety, we should not go without water for more than three days.

- **The Partial Fast**—In a partial fast, we restrict some aspect of our diet rather than totally abstaining from food. (See Daniel 1:15; 10:2-3.)

Consistent fasting will have a deep spiritual impact on our lives. If possible, every saint should practice normal and absolute fasting. Of course, certain health conditions, such as diabetes, will preclude some Christians from going on either a normal or an absolute fast. Partial fasting is often the answer for a believer in this situation. If there are any health concerns, it is best to seek medical advice before fasting. In the end, we must always remember that God honors every effort we make to deny our flesh, whether through a partial, normal, or absolute fast.

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## OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FAST

We can accomplish fasting through two methods in our lives. By all means, whatever method we rely on, we must spend time in fasting.

- **By Inspiration**—The Holy Ghost prompts us to fast because of some special

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need, perhaps unknown to us at the time. We feel a burden, need, or desire to fast. This is the easiest way to fast because we have such strong feelings to do so. However, we should not rely on this method completely. If we do so, our seasons of inspiration can become too far apart.

- **By Commitment**—Dedication to God's cause demands that we fast simply because it is beneficial. The believer cannot carry out spiritual disciplines by inspiration alone. Self-control is essential for the Christian, and it is vital when we fast. We should discipline ourselves to fast, and we should also fast when our leader calls on us to do so. We should not wait on others, but we should make our own commitments and keep them.

Blessings await us, whatever method prompts us to fast.

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## EXAMPLES OF FASTING

The following are biblical examples of fasting:

1. **Moses** fasted forty days on Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 9:9).

2. **David** humbled his soul through fasting (II Samuel 12:16; Psalm 35:13; 69:10; 109:24).

3. **Elijah** fasted forty days (I Kings 19:8).

4. **Ezra**: Others fasted with him for protection and guidance back to Israel from Persia (Ezra 8:21-23). He fasted without bread and water because of the sins of Israel (Ezra 10:6).

5. **Nehemiah** wept, mourned, and fasted because the wall of Jerusalem was broken down (Nehemiah 1:4).

6. **Israel**: On many occasions the Israelites fasted nationally (Nehemiah 9:1-3).

7. **Nineveh**: The king, citizens, and even animals fasted with no food or water as they repented (Jonah 3:1-10).

8. **Daniel**: While he confessed the sins of his people to God during a fast, God gave him the vision of the seventy weeks (Daniel 9:24-27). During a twenty-one-day fast, the prince of Persia hindered the angel from coming with the answer (Daniel 10:1-21). This event helps us understand better the struggles we have in prayer and fasting.

9. **Anna** served God with fastings and prayers day and night (Luke 2:36-37).

10. **Jesus** fasted forty days (Matthew 4:1-11). Then He overcame Satan by the

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power of the Word.

11. **Cornelius** fasted four days; afterwards, Peter came and Cornelius and his household received the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:30-48).

12. **The church at Antioch** fasted and prayed when sending forth Paul and Barnabas as missionaries (Acts 13:1-4).

13. **Paul** fasted three days at his conversion (Acts 9:9). As a Christian, he fasted often (II Corinthians 11:27).

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## WHAT WE SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT DO WHILE FASTING

Below are some scriptural guidelines for us to follow that will make our fasting more effective. These guidelines are taken from Isaiah 58:3-12 and Matthew 6:16-18. We will highlight brief quotes from each. Only brief remarks can accompany each due to the size of the subject and lack of space. On your own, research each point in detail.

- **WHAT WE SHOULD NOT DO WHILE FASTING**

1. **"Find pleasure and exact all your labours."** Israel demanded servants to work with no time to pray, meditate, or study God's Word. We should lay aside pleasure and as much business as possible to obtain the most from our fast.

2. **"Fast for strife and debate."** Fasting in order to exalt ourselves, as the Pharisee did (Luke 18:10-14), is not acceptable to God.

3. **"Smite with the fist of wickedness."** Israel continued in their wrongdoing and ill treatment of others. We must eradicate sin from our lives if our fasting is to please God. This principle applies to a believer who persists in hypocritical conduct. Fasting can help us conquer weaknesses in our lives.

4. **Be "of a sad countenance."** Looking sad and eliciting sympathy from others destroys the effectiveness of fasting. In this we have our reward, not from God but from people.

5. **"Disfigure [our] faces."** It is wrong to distort our facial features to show others that we are fasting.

6. **"Appear unto men to fast."** Seeking to impress people is the wrong motive. We should seek to impress God.

**NOTES:**

- **WHAT WE SHOULD DO WHILE FASTING**

1. **"Loose the bands of wickedness."** We must disengage ourselves from anything we are doing wrong.

2. **"Undo the heavy burdens."** We should lay aside not only physical burdens but also spiritual ones.

3. **"Let the oppressed go free."** We should give people freedom, forgive trespasses and offenses, and treat others justly.

4. **"Break every yoke."** Let us lay aside every weight and sin that besets us (Hebrews 12:1), breaking every yoke that binds us and keeps us from being spiritual.

5. **"Deal thy bread to the hungry, and . . . poor."** We are to give literal and spiritual bread to a starving world.

6. **"When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him."** —This statement applies to both spiritual and physical needs.

7. **"Hide not thyself from thine own flesh."** We are to restore brotherhood among saints as well as homes and families that are torn apart.

8. **"Anoint thine head, and wash thy face."** This was a daily Jewish custom. Jesus said that on the days we fast, we are to go forth as on other days, not appearing to others to fast.

9. **"Appear not unto men to fast."** See above.

10. **"Fast . . . unto thy Father which is in secret."** Let our fasting be unto God, performed discreetly, with a normal appearance.

This is the fast God has chosen.

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## RESULTS AND REWARDS OF FASTING

When we participate in God's chosen fast, we can expect results and rewards. Isaiah 58:8-12 reveals sixteen promises and blessings that can be ours if we meet the five conditions.

- **Promises**

1. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning."

2. "Thine health shall spring forth speedily."

**NOTES:**

3. "Thy righteousness shall go before thee."
4. "The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward [rear guard]."
5. "Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer."
6. "Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am."
7. "Then shall thy light arise in obscurity."
8. "Thy darkness shall be as the noon day."
9. "The LORD shall guide thee continually."
10. "The LORD shall . . . satisfy thy soul in drought."
11. "The LORD shall . . . make fat thy bones."
12. "Thou shalt be like a watered garden."
13. "Thou shalt be like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."
14. "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places."
15. "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations."
16. "Thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in."

- **Conditions**

1. "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke."
2. "If thou take away the putting forth of the finger."
3. "If thou put away speaking vanity."
4. "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry."
5. "If thou satisfy the afflicted soul."

Each of these promises and conditions has spiritual implications; therefore, it is important to apply them in a spiritual sense.

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## DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

Apparently there is a close correlation between eating (especially excessive eating) and our desire for material things. In an extended fast of three days or more, there is a tremendous alteration of our thinking, physical desires, and ambition to acquire material possessions. Upon returning to a normal diet, all these former desires come rushing in upon us. "I have done something I shouldn't!" is the first sensation one feels, which is not true. In short, our natural appetites and spiritual desires run counter to each other. This fact alone should drive us to fast. We can develop discipline of life if we regularly conquer the legitimate practice of eating. We cannot fast all the time—God does not expect us to—but our problem is not excessive fasting, but a lack of fasting.

Married couples, who are both Christians, should study I Corinthians 7:1-5, know its meaning, and apply it to their lives.

We could have more of everything God has promised us if we would discipline our flesh to fast and pray. Religious circles have almost abandoned fasting. I challenge you to practice the scriptural teaching and concept of fasting.

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## BREAKING A FAST

Most experts in fasting recommend that people should take the same number of days they have fasted to return to a normal diet. After fasting three days, we take three days to return to normal eating. A fast should broken with light food, juices, and fruits. Sanctified common sense is the best rule to apply here.

Fasting is an irrefutable biblical teaching. Let us arise in the power of the Spirit and physical discipline and pursue God's will. Let us make a commitment to fast until the Bridegroom returns. Then we will no longer need to discipline this flesh—we will have new bodies!

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## ENDNOTE

[1]Arthur Wallis, *God's Chosen Fast* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1968), 13-20.

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## NOTES

**LESSON 15**

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# TITHING

## MALACHI 3:8-10

As we approach the biblical subject of tithing, let us examine passages of Scripture and thoughts as a source of enlightenment and help. Condemning and berating those who fail in this area is not the purpose of this study. Encouragement, instruction, and warning, if needed, are the goals of this lesson.

Traditionally, many view tithing as an accepted form of taxation, approaching it with the same general attitude as paying sales tax or property tax. Others believe that tithing is not necessary; therefore, they never investigate what God says about it. With such prevailing ideas, many fail to pay tithes. Others contribute as they wish, and others donate to some church-related institution, thinking they have done their part. Tithing is more than a tradition, however, and it is not a tax. We should not take this practice lightly or perform it unscripturally.

Since such attitudes exist, perhaps a few soul-searching questions are in order. Should we pay tithes? What are tithes? Where and to whom should we pay our tithes? What should I tithe on? When should I tithe? A thorough study of the Scripture will answer these pertinent questions.

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## WHAT DOES THE WORD *TITHE* MEAN?

By comparing Genesis 14:20 with Hebrews 7:2-4, we see that the word *tithe* means a tenth.

1. **Dekatos**—is a Greek word meaning tenth.

2. **Maasrah**—is a Hebrew word meaning tenth.

3. **Tithe—**Our English word comes from an Anglo-Saxon word, *teothe*, which means tenth.

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## WHAT IS TITHING?

Someone has defined tithing in the following ways:

1. **Mathematically**—it is a tenth (Genesis 28:22; Leviticus 27:30).

2. **Scripturally**—it is a law (Deuteronomy 12:6; 14:22).

**NOTES:**

3. **Morally**—it is a debt (Malachi 3:8; Matthew 23:23).

4. **Economically**—it is an investment (Matthew 6:20; Luke 6:38).

5. **Spiritually**—it is a blessing (Malachi 3:10; Galatians 3:9).

By reflecting on these five points, we recognize the beauty of tithing.

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## WHERE DID TITHING ORIGINATE?

Tithing, as already stated, is not a traditional monetary system designed by people to further God's work. Tithing is a Bible plan, originating before the law of Moses. It was incorporated into the law, and it is now God's method of financial support for His work in the New Testament era of grace.

- **Before the Law**

  1. Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec (Genesis 14:20). This is the first mention of tithing in the Bible.

  2. Jacob promised God the tenth, or tithes (Genesis 28:22).

- **Under the Law**

  1. The law of Moses stipulated the what, when, where, and how of tithing. In the tithe of crops from the land, if a part was redeemed by paying cash, one-fifth of the value was added. When counting cattle, oxen, or sheep, the tenth animal to pass under the rod was given to the Levites (Leviticus 27:30-34).

     I have often been asked, If I get behind on my tithes am I to pay an additional one-fifth, or a twenty-percent penalty? Let us examine what the Bible says on this subject in context.

     In every instance where one-fifth was added or required, there was always a question whether the person was fully paying the amount due the Lord. I have included every recorded instance where God required an additional twenty percent added to the principal.

     a. A man sinning in ignorance concerning holy things was to bring a ram as a trespass offering. This type of sin offering required the offender to add one-fifth to it (Leviticus 5:14-16).

     b. When someone lied about what he found or deceived his neighbor in a matter of trust, he had to make restitution and add one-fifth (Leviticus 6:1-6). This passage covers (1) property in trust, (2) property in part-

**NOTES:**

nership, (3) stolen property, (4) property obtained through deceit, and (5) lost property.

c. If in ignorance a person ate of holy things belonging only to the priesthood, he had to restore the items with one-fifth added (Leviticus 22:14-16).

d. Five interrelated matters concerning redeeming (buying back) things are covered in Leviticus 27:1-34. When this was done, God required one-fifth to be added to the principal.

(1) Redeeming an animal designated for sacrifice.

(2) Redeeming a house offered to God.

(3) Buying back a field offered to God.

(4) Redeeming a firstborn unclean animal.

(5) Redeeming seed or fruit.

e. In Numbers 5:5-10, we find a similar situation as in point a. Read these passages again for clarification.

God did not, nor does He now, require people to pay a twenty-percent penalty on tithes not paid on time. In the instances above, a question of full payment or fair payment is the object of discussion, not being late on payment. God instituted these rules under the law as a matter of fairness to the offender and the work of God.

The best policy is to pay our tithes as we receive income. If for some reason we are delinquent, we should ask God to help us and then catch up as soon as possible. Refusing to pay tithes or never catching up when we get behind is wrong and should not be the practice of any Christian.

2. God chose the tribe of Levi (Levites) as a special group to care for the Tabernacle. They were not to have an inheritance among the people; therefore they were supported by the tithes of the Israelites (Numbers 18:20-24).

3. Tithes were paid in the place God designated, not anywhere in Israel where people wanted to pay them. Tithing was paid to the Levites (Deuteronomy 12:5-6, 11, 17-18).

4. Israel had been robbing God of tithes and offerings, and a curse was upon them. God promised them a blessing if they would obey His Word (Malachi 3:8-10).

**NOTES:**

5. Apparently every three years a special tithe was paid to help the unfortunate (Deuteronomy 14:21-29; 26:12-15).

- **Under Grace**

1. Scribes and Pharisees believed in paying tithes, and Jesus commended them for this practice (Matthew 23:23). They were not hypocrites for paying tithes; they were hypocrites for leaving other essentials undone.

2. Abraham paid tithes (Genesis 14:20). Those who are of faith are the children of Abraham (Galatians 3:7). If we are the children of Abraham, then we will do the works of Abraham (John 8:39).

3. "And here men that die receive tithes" (Hebrews 7:8).

4. Paul gave an outstanding exposition regarding the financial support of the ministry in I Corinthians 9:1-14. God's only method for supporting the ministry is through the tithes of the people whom the minister serves.

Paul did not support himself entirely through tent making as some teach. (See II Corinthians 11:7-13.) He may or may not have taken financial support from the Corinthian church, but he definitely received financial support from other churches. He instructed the Corinthian church to support the ministry and asked their forgiveness for not taking financial support from them (II Corinthians 12:13).

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## TITHING AND WORSHIP

Paying tithes should not be a dreaded task, but one of worship. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7). Abraham, Jacob, and the Israelites paid tithes and gave offerings as an act of worship (Deuteronomy 26:1-11). Deuteronomy 26:1-11 is one of the most beautiful portions of Scripture on bringing our tithes to the house of God. Since tithing is an act of worship, it necessarily involves spiritual people. Spiritual people tithe regularly, just as they sing, pray, and testify.

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## TITHING AND FIRST FRUITS

God always required Israel to dedicate the first fruits of everything (Exodus 22:29-30). God set the Levites apart, freeing His claim on every firstborn male of all the other tribes (Exodus 23:19; Numbers 3:12-13; Deuteronomy 18:4). The tithes of the Israelites were a means of giving the first fruits to God (Deuteronomy 26:1-11). First fruits are devoted things and belong to God exclusively.

**NOTES:**

Jericho, the first city Israel conquered after entering Canaan, was to be left untouched by the Israelites. They were not to take spoils from this city since it was a type of first fruits, belonging to God. Achan stole some of these consecrated things, and they became a curse to him (Joshua 6:17-24; 7:11). If we take anything that belongs to God and use it for ourselves, it becomes a curse to us.

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## QUESTIONS CONCERNING TITHING

The following questions cover the basics about tithing. Sincere, honest-hearted individuals will not argue and strive over every penny placed in the work of God. They are delighted to give liberally to the cause of God in any way they can. Yet fair and sincere questions concerning tithing demand a Bible answer.

- **Should we use tithes to support widows and orphans?**

  I Timothy 5:1-16 gives eight requirements a widow must meet before she is eligible for financial assistance from the church. Not only must she meet these eight requirements, but she also cannot have any family members still living who could provide assistance to her. If she has family members, including nephews, they are to assist the widowed member of their family so the church will not be obligated. Scripturally, tithing is not designed to support the widows and orphans in the church.

  Orphans and widows desperately need assistance, visitation, and prayer. Charity will cause the true saints of God to assist widows who are truly in need. After we have supported the church with tithes and offerings, we should then be willing to give to the less fortunate.

- **What should we use tithes for?**

  The Bible gives examples of how we are to use tithes in the church today. Tithing was first paid to Melchisedec (Genesis 14:20). Christ's priesthood was after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 5 :1-11; 7:1-17). Levites, who were Old Testament priests set apart to care for the Tabernacle and offer sacrifices, received tithes for their livelihood from the other Israelites (Numbers 18:20-24). The churches that Paul founded supported him, and this was surely through tithing (I Corinthians 9:1-14). Paul taught that elders and ministers who labor in word and doctrine are worthy of double honor, speaking in the context of financial support (I Timothy 5:17-18). Ministers who preach the gospel are to live by the gospel (I Corinthians 9:14). The first use of tithing should be to care for the minister of a particular congregation. His needs should be adequately met. He should have the oversight and direction of the tithing of the local congregation. Of course, once his needs are met, he should channel the rest into other areas of the work of God. An honest minister will be fair with people and God!

**NOTES:**

- **Where should I pay my tithes?**

  Tithing went to the Levites and was sent to the place in which God set His name (Deuteronomy 12:5-6, 11-17). Tithing was brought to the house of God and set before the altar (Malachi 3:4-10). I Corinthians 9:1-14 gives insight on the subject: The pastor sows spiritual things and reaps material things. He ministers about holy things and waits at the altar. Consequently he lives by the things brought to the house of God. He is like a person who plants a vineyard, cares for a flock, or goes to war. He receives help to fight the battle, eats the fruit of the vineyard, drinks the milk of the flock, and receives meat from the flock. Briefly stated, a person's vocation is his or her means of livelihood regardless of what it may be.

  We should pay our tithes where we attend church and to the pastor under whom we sit. We would not work for an employer who paid someone else for our labor. Would we plant a crop and not eat any of it, or tend a flock and not use the milk or meat? God's plan in the secular and spiritual world demands that people's labor and effort support them financially.

  It is not right to send tithes and offerings to a radio or TV preacher, orphanage, another church, a visiting minister, missionary, Bible school, or some other religious project outside the local church. Worthy projects should be supported, but not with the tithes that belong to the church we attend.

- **How much of my money is tithes?**

  According to Scripture, a tithe is ten percent of our increase. It is dishonest to say that tithes are any amount less than ten percent. God knows how much we make and how much we owe. We are not robbing people but God when we refuse to pay tithes.

  Those who own businesses, such as farmers, homebuilders, and storeowners, do not tithe on every dollar they handle to run their business; they tithe on their profits only. Those working on salary or hourly wage jobs should tithe on their earnings. Taking our insurance payments, retirement, car payment, house payment, and so on out of our earnings before we pay tithes is not fair. If we pay tithes on anything that is an increase to us, then all will be well. We should consider the trouble Cain got into with God for bringing what he wanted to bring instead of what God required.

- **Should ministers pay tithes?**

  The example of the Levites paying tithes to the other priests answers this question affirmatively (Numbers 18:26-32; Nehemiah 10:37-39). They also offered up a special sacrifice of the tithes, and it was counted as tithes from them. Levi paid tithes in Abraham (Hebrews 7:9). Ministers who receive income from any source certainly owe ten percent of that to the work of God. There are other ministers, overseers, and other portions of the kingdom of

**NOTES:**

God who need financial support. Any minister who belongs to a religious organization should support it with his finances as the organizational body asks him. A minister who does not belong to a religious organization should direct ten percent of his income into the work of God. A minister in a local church should support his pastor with his tithes. The Bible requires all ministers to pay tithes.

- **What happens if I do not pay tithes?**

  First of all, Scripture says we are like robbers if we do not pay tithes (Malachi 3:8-10). Moreover, we close the windows of heaven upon our soul. It is possible to put money in bags with holes in them (Haggai 1:2-6). This is another dilemma of the nontither. Solomon said the liberal (generous) soul shall be made fat (rich), and he who waters shall be watered himself (Proverbs 11:24-25). What measure we use will be measured to us again (Luke 6:38). Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also (Matthew 6:19-21). Paying tithes is one way of watering, laying up treasure in heaven, and measuring out. We are the losers if we fail to tithe.

  According to Malachi 3:11, there is a devourer in every life when we disobey God. Unseen to us, this devourer consumes what we owe God, and we suffer spiritually. No reward is forthcoming from God when the devourer consumes. It is far better to give to God what is His, be blessed for it, and then receive our reward, than for God to take it through some other means.

- **May I place my tithes in the offering without designating them as tithes?**

  According to the Bible, there is a distinction between tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-10). God's Word teaches us how to give offerings and to pay tithes. The tithe is ten percent of our increase; offerings are a sacrificial gift from the remainder of our personal money. We should keep each one in its distinctive category, not evading responsibility or creating a false impression in either area. Tithing given as an offering is not counted as tithes.

## PRINCIPLES FOR GIVING

We should give according to the following scriptural principles:

1. As God has prospered us (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

2. According to what we have (II Corinthians 8:12-15).

3. In the same manner that we like to receive (II Corinthians 9:6-7).

4. As we purpose in our hearts (II Corinthians 9:6-7).

**NOTES:**

5. Not grudgingly (II Corinthians 9:6-7).

6. Not out of necessity (II Corinthians 9:6-7).

7. Cheerfully (II Corinthians 9:6-7).

8. With simplicity (Romans 12:8).

Our chief example in giving is Jesus Christ. He was rich but became poor for our sakes (II Corinthians 8:9). He was not obligated or indebted to humans, but He willingly offered Himself for us. Tithes, we owe; offerings are additional gifts of love and sacrifice given in the spirit of Christ.

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We should be fair and honest with what God has entrusted to us. We must never forget that we are stewards of God's gifts and that everything we have belongs to God.

For further study, see Roy L. Moss, *The Lord's Portion: A Scriptural Study of Tithing* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press). It is an accurate and scriptural reference on tithing.

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**NOTES**

**LESSON 16**

**NOTES:**

# THE SABBATH

### EXODUS 20:8-11; MATTHEW 12:1-13; HEBREWS 4:1-11

Through the centuries, controversy has developed regarding the Sabbath, or more specifically, the seventh day of the week. Which day is the seventh day? Are we to observe it as the Sabbath? Are we as Christians to observe or regard a certain day of the week as a part of our faith? If we observe a Sabbath day, which day of the week is it to be? We must answer these and other questions for those inquiring into what we believe.

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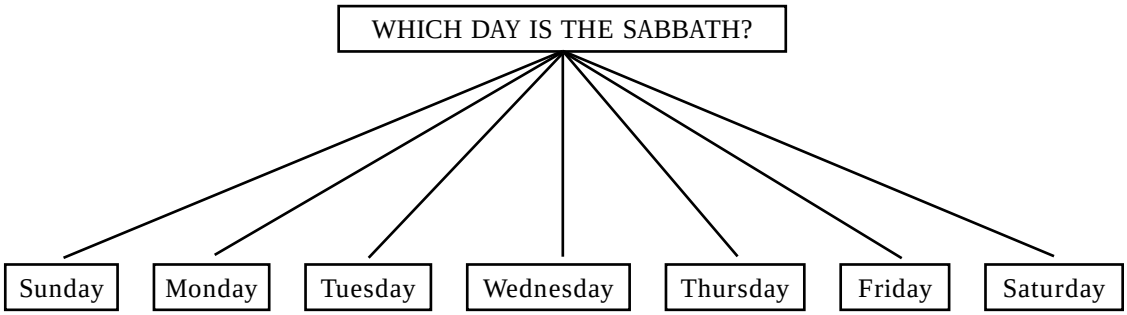
## WHICH DAY IS THE SABBATH?




The object of this study is to explore the historical and scriptural importance and significance of the Sabbath. We will view it through various eras of time, its application to each, and finally its significance to our time.

Unbiblical and biased opinions and beliefs have a way of being handed down from generation to generation. Each succeeding generation often adds to or takes from these traditions until they become grossly distorted. At this juncture, let us lay aside ideas and opinions and accept what the Bible says concerning the Sabbath.

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## DEFINITION

- **Sabbath**—comes from the Hebrew word *shabbath*, which means to rest, sever, desist, come to an end or intermission. In Assyrian, it means the rest of the heart. Contrary to popular opinion, this word is never translated seventh or seventh day.

**NOTES:**

## OUR CALENDAR

We should give some consideration to the structure of our calendar, since there are wide variations among nations on the proper way to demarcate time. Jews use one method, Muslims another, and in America we use yet another system.

The Egyptians developed our basic calendar in 2773 B.C. In 46 BC, when Julius Caesar adopted this calendar for use in the Roman Empire, an eighty-day error had accumulated. To compensate for this, the leap year was developed. By A.D. 1582, another ten-day error had accumulated. Pope Gregory XIII compensated for this by omitting ten days from the calendar. He declared that October 15, 1582, would begin the day after October 4, 1582.

Because our calendar was adopted during the reign of Julius Caesar, it has since been known as the Julian calendar. England did not adopt the Julian calendar until A.D. 1752. Russia adopted it in A.D. 1918.

The Julian calendar poses many problems because of the additions, deletions, and errors through the centuries. With this brief background on the development, adoption, and use of our calendar, let us study the Sabbath day.

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## ON WHAT DAY DID GOD BEGIN CREATION?

"Somewhat of a strange question," you may muse. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to our study of days as they relate to the Sabbath. God created all things, including humans, in six days (Genesis 1:1-31). At this point we will not enter into the debate concerning the length of creative days. God then rested on the seventh day, blessing and sanctifying it (Genesis 2:1-3).

Some teach that we must cease from any type or form of physical labor on the seventh day of our calendar, because God rested on the seventh day of the week. If this were the case, are we to rest on the *same* seventh day God rested on? If we are, then we must find out what day God began His creative work. Saturday is the seventh day of our Julian calendar. Can we prove that God began his creative work on Sunday, finished it on Friday, and then rested Saturday? I think not! This information is not available to us.

We should also note that the names of days come from the sun, moon, planets, and pagan gods.

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## CREATION OF HUMANS

God made humans on the sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:24-31). God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and instructed them to dress and keep it, which indicates

**NOTES:**

labor or work (Genesis 2:15). If they obeyed God and went to work the very next day, then they were working on the day God was resting.

Using our Julian calendar in this illustration, God would have begun His creative work on Sunday, made humans on Friday, and then rested on Saturday. If Adam and Eve went to work the next day after they were created, then they went to work on Saturday, worked through Thursday, and rested on Friday. Can we prove any of this? Absolutely not.

These two points sound a little difficult, to say the least. Yet if we are to accept as an inviolable decree that we are to cease from physical labor on Saturday, then they need serious consideration.

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## FIRST MENTION OF THE SABBATH IN THE BIBLE

The Bible first mentions the Sabbath in relation to the giving of manna to Israel (Exodus 16:22-30). For six days manna fell in the camp of Israel with twice as much falling on the sixth day. This gave them sufficient food for the seventh day, since no manna fell on this day.

Did the manna fall for the first time on Sunday? If not, they did not observe Saturday as a Sabbath. If manna fell on Monday for the first time, Sunday would be the seventh day for them. The fact is, we do not know what day the manna fell according to our Julian calendar. God also commanded Israel not to go out of their dwelling on the seventh day. If we observe a Sabbath, must we observe this part of the rule?

Apparently there was a time change for Israel when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:1-2). Their departure from Egypt was a new beginning of days and months. No longer were their lives governed by Egyptian time. We should think on these things and how they relate to the observance of a special day.

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## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

In the Ten Commandments, God gave a command regarding the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-10). Israel was to work for six days and rest on the seventh day. God gave this command specifically to the Jews and did not carry it over to the Gentiles in the church age. Again, the Ten Commandments would have had to be given on our Sunday for Saturday to be the seventh day of rest.

Those who teach that the Ten Commandments are *not* part of the Mosaic law should note that Paul declared, “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7). This quotation comes from the Ten Commandments, which Paul called the law. Paul declared us to be dead to the

**NOTES:**

law (Romans 7:1-7). He also stated that we are now under grace (Romans 6:14; Galatians 3:1-29).

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## REQUIREMENTS FOR SABBATH KEEPING

The law of Moses attached many regulations and requirements to the Sabbath day. If we place ourselves under the restriction of a seventh-day Sabbath by the Julian calendar, then we should observe the rules attendant to that day.

1. A person not keeping the Sabbath was put to death (Exodus 12-18; 35:2). A man was stoned to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36).

2. Israel was commanded not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath (Exodus 35:3).

3. Every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year when Israel did not plant any crops; it was the Sabbath of the land (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1-55). Israel was to observe the year of jubilee. No crops were to be planted on the forty-ninth or fiftieth year in the land of Israel.

These rules pertained exclusively to the Sabbath of Israel. If we observe a Sabbath, do all or any of these rules apply to us?

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## SABBATH DAY'S JOURNEY

The Bible mentions a Sabbath day's journey only once (Acts 1:12). Apparently this was a traditional restriction that developed through the years among the Jews, so they would not be guilty of not resting on the Sabbath. They were restricted from traveling more than 3,000 to 3,600 feet on the Sabbath.

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## NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING CONCERNING THE SABBATH

Jesus plucked grain on the Sabbath, thus breaking the Sabbath traditions according to the Jews of His day (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-10). Jesus healed on the Sabbath, again raising the ire of the Jews, who accused Him of being a Sabbath breaker (Luke 13:10-17; John 5:1-18). Jesus ate with a chief Pharisee on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1). Not once did Jesus indicate or tell anyone to observe a certain day for a Sabbath. If Jesus intended for us to keep the Sabbath in the New Testament, why did He not mention it along with the other requirements to the rich young ruler? (Matthew 19:16-22). Jesus taught that the law was fulfilled when we love God and our neighbor as ourselves,

**NOTES:**

not when we observe the Sabbath (Matthew 22:34-40; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8).

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## FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Confusion arises in many minds when some try to make the first day of the week a so-called *Christian Sabbath*, replacing the seventh-day Jewish Sabbath. This is not the intent of this lesson. Our objective is to examine every detail pertaining to the Sabbath day.

1. Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9).

2. The disciples met together on this day (John 20:19-26).

3. Paul's followers met on the first day of the week to hear him preach (Acts 20:7).

4. The Corinthian church collected and set aside offerings on this day (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

5. According to *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia* and *Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, the Day of Pentecost was on the first day of the week. (See Acts 2:1-4.)

According to our Julian calendar, Sunday is the first day of our week. This does not prove that Israel's calendar at the time of Jesus' resurrection corresponds to our present-day calendar. Apparently after the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples and early church met on the first day of the week. No doubt many of the Jewish converts held to the letter of the law and observed the Sabbath as usual.

In A.D. 321, according to historical record, Constantine the Great, the emperor of Rome, declared Sunday as a day of rest and a time for worship. Since Constantine did this, some would have us believe the Roman Catholic Church began the custom of meeting on the first day of the week. The apostles and early church began this custom long before the Catholic church came into existence. Catholics later adopted this practice, but it originated with the apostles.

History records that the early church writers who lived prior to the Council of Nicaea observed the first day of the week as a time of worship and rest. Among these were prominent leaders and teachers such as Ignatius, Justin, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus, Origen, Victorianus, Eusebius, and others. Tertullian was first to write that Christians should cease from labor on Sunday.

**NOTES:**

## SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES CONCERNING THE OBSERVANCE OF DAYS

The New Testament says much about not observing certain days and times as a binding ordinance for salvation. We should carefully observe the context when studying these references.

1. Paul preached on the Jewish Sabbath, but there is no indication that he observed the Sabbath as such. As a Pharisee Paul was trained to observe the Old Testament Sabbath (Acts 13:42; 16:13; 18:4). Yet in all his writings he never once indicated that New Testament believers are to observe any day as a Sabbath.

2. Paul gave liberty in esteeming a day unto the Lord, along with eating or not eating certain things (Romans 14:5-6). He did not demand or suggest for us to observe a certain day unto the Lord.

3. II Corinthians 3:1-18 speaks of the law as "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones." Though it was glorious, it was done away with, while the "ministration of the spirit" and "the ministration of righteousness" have excelled and remain (See Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15.)

4. Christ nailed to the cross the handwriting of ordinances that were against us (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15; II Corinthians 3:11).

5. The Sabbath of the law of Moses was a shadow of things to come (Colossians 2:16-17). Now that we have the reality of Christ, we no longer need the shadow.

6. Paul warned the Galatian church about requiring the observance of days, months, times, and years (Galatians 4:9-11).

7. While dealing with matters of the Old Testament law in the Jerusalem Council, the apostles did not mention New Testament believers observing a Sabbath (Acts 15:1-35).

8. According to *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, the term *Lord's Day* refers to the first day of the week (Revelation 1:10).

Having thoroughly examined the Scriptures relating to both the seventh day and the first day of the week, we must make a decision concerning what is binding on New Testament believers. Here are several observations and considerations based upon Scripture. We must keep in mind the era of time and that Jesus Christ did not originate our Julian calendar. The observations below take these points into consideration and predate all human calendars.

**NOTES:**

## OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE SEVENTH DAY

1. God rested on the seventh day, sanctifying and blessing it. We have no conclusive proof that He began His creative work on our Sunday so that our Saturday would be the day He rested.

2. God did not give any commands for people to rest on the seventh day of the week from Adam until Moses.

3. The first mention of the Sabbath is in Exodus 16:22-30, when God gave Israel manna to eat. They were to gather manna for six days and rest on the seventh day. No manna fell on the seventh day.

4. The Ten Commandments required Israel to observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). We have no evidence that this day *at that time* was our Saturday.

5. God placed further regulations on the Sabbath. Israel was not to kindle a fire on this day (Exodus 35:3). The death penalty was imposed upon violators of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-18; 35:2).

6. The observance of the Sabbath continued from Mount Sinai until the New Testament era. Many human restrictions were attached to God's ordinances concerning the Sabbath, such as not allowing people to go over a Sabbath day's journey (Acts 1:12).

7. The Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day alleged that, according to their tradition, Jesus broke the Sabbath law.

8. There is not one mention, allusion, or suggestion in the Bible that New Testament saints should observe the seventh day, or any other day, as a Sabbath. We are under grace rather than the law.

## OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE FIRST DAY

Several observations are in order in light of our study and the Word of God pertaining to the first day of the week.

1. God did not sanctify or decree the first day of our week as a Sabbath.

2. Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week. We cannot be sure that this day correlates with our Sunday.

3. Jesus' disciples met on the first day of the week.

**NOTES:**

4. History records that the early church met on the first day of the week for worship.

5. Constantine decreed Sunday as a national day of rest and worship in A.D. 321. The Roman Catholic Church later adopted this day as a day of rest and worship. Later, Catholics and Protestants transferred many Jewish regulations concerning the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday.

6. Many Protestants rejected the rules of the seventh-day Jewish Sabbath as applying to the first day of the week, although they met for worship on this day.

7. Most modern employers, the government, and the schools give the people the first day of the week off. This is a matter of custom and tradition, allowing for a time of physical rest.

8. There are no biblical regulations relating to our first day of the week. Resting or worshiping on the first day of the week is no indication that we are bound by Roman Catholicism. Whatever our activities may be, they do not exalt this day above the other six days. Many people have Sunday off, school is out, most churches have services, and since we believe in attending church whenever it is announced, we go. (See Hebrews 10:25.)

9. Some teach that during the great tribulation the Beast (Antichrist) will declare our Sunday as a national day of worship, and if people refuse to worship on Sunday they will be killed. In Scripture, however, doom is not predicated upon worshiping or not worshiping on Sunday, but upon receiving the Beast's mark and refusing to worship the image of the Beast (Revelation 13:15-18; 14:9-11). Worshiping on Sunday or any other day is not going to make someone a follower of the Beast. The church will be gone before the Beast comes to power anyway.

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## CONSIDERATIONS

We need to settle in our minds several matters and questions regarding the observance of a certain day as a Sabbath.

1. Is observing a certain day a matter of salvation? Will we be eternally lost because we do not rest on a certain day of the week? For Israel it was a matter of life and death under the law (Exodus 31:12-18; 35:2). It is not so for us.

2. If we are to observe a certain day, which day is it to be? If it is the seventh day, then the seventh day after which day? The same question applies to the first day of the week.

3. Does every Christian worldwide have to observe a twenty-four-hour Sabbath?

**NOTES:**

If so, whose calendar do we go by? Do the time zones and the International Date Line figure into this?

4. Are there Sabbath-day rules (first or seventh day) for New Testament believers to observe? If so, what are they, and where do we find them in the Bible?

5. Does the Bible require cessation from all types of work or just certain types of work on a specific day of the week? If so, what type of work must cease, and on which day?

6. Is it unbiblical, wrong, or a sin to work on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday? If so, which day is it wrong to work on? If it is sinful, then we must by all means *all* observe a specific twenty-four-hour period of rest. *Every* Christian *must* observe this time period with no exceptions unless it would be to worship, preserve the life of human or animal, or perform some religious duty. Breaking this rule, if it exists, constitutes disobedience to God's Word, subjects us to the judgment of God now, and will doom us eternally.

7. Will a person be eternally lost for not observing a first- or seventh-day Sabbath or at least one day of rest out of seven?

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## CONCLUSION

According to the Bible, we are not bound to a a weekly Sabbath. New Testament believers have found their rest (Sabbath) in Christ through the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-4, 38; John 3:1-8). This is the rest spoken of by Isaiah and the writer of Hebrews (Isaiah 28:9-12; Hebrews 4:1-11). A millennium of one thousand years will be the rest for the earth, the antitype of God resting on the seventh day (II Peter 3:8; Revelation 20:1-6).

Neither is there a so-called Christian Sabbath to observe on the first day of the week as a replacement of the Jewish Sabbath on the seventh day of the week. Commandments, rules, and regulations of the Jewish seventh day do not apply to our first day of the week.

True Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, walk with God each day of the week. Their rest is in the Spirit of God, and they attend all day and night church services whenever possible.

As Christians, if we want to set aside a certain day of the week to worship, pray, study God's Word, or do good deeds, the Bible grants us that liberty (Romans 14:5-6). Doing so does not make the day a holy day, Old Testament regulations do not apply to it, no certain day is required or excluded, and we should not to impose this observance upon others as a necessary part of their salvation. We should assemble with other saints to worship on the day or night that our congregation designates.

**NOTES:**

In view of God's Word, a Christian should count every day as holy. Wisdom dictates that we set aside a time of cessation from physical labor on the basis of God's law of temperance. Workaholics are intemperate and this is unscriptural. Each of us needs physical rest and time to meditate, be with our family, be alone, pray, and read.

Honoring God with our soul, body, and spirit is His will for each of us. Using every day to glorify God should be our highest aim. Our age is repulsed by so-called Sunday Christians who live sinful lives six days a week, then go to church on Sunday and profess to be saved. We must live Christianity seven days per week, worshiping God any day or night we have an opportunity. Soon our pilgrimage will end and we will step into the eternal Sabbath where no night ever comes. Until then, we live for Him every day and every hour of our lives.

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**NOTES**

**LESSON 17**

**NOTES:**

# DIETARY LAWS FOR NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS

## I TIMOTHY 4:1-6

From Genesis to Revelation, God dictates what humans can and cannot eat. Food sources were a primary portion of God's creative acts. On the third day of God's creative work, the earth brought forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit (Genesis 1:9-13). From this point forward until we reach the New Jerusalem, wherein is the Tree of Life (Revelation 22:2), God has much to say about what humanity eats. Eating forbidden fruit caused the fall of humans in the beginning, and even today, there can still be violations of God's will in this area.

What is and what is not right for a person to eat? We will not focus our attention on diet in the sense of healthy or unhealthy food. Rather our purpose is to study all of God's Word, as it pertains to each era of time, to determine what is acceptable or unacceptable to Him.

We must rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15). We must determine the age of time to which dietary laws apply. Some things that God allowed or forbade at certain points in time have changed. Focusing on the age of grace will be the main impetus of this lesson, since this is the era in which we live.

A brief overview of the Scripture is essential to understand this subject.

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## BEFORE THE FLOOD

Several centuries span the distance from the fall of humanity until the Flood. It appears that God's decree to humans concerning diet did not change until after the flood of Noah's day.

Apparently, humans were vegetarian during this era. (See Genesis 1:29-30; 9:1-4.) If they were allowed to eat animals for food before the Flood, there is no specific reference of it in the Bible. This does not mean that we have to be vegetarians today.

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## AFTER THE FLOOD

After the Flood, the fear and dread of humanity fell upon the animals, fowls, and fish (Genesis 9:1-4). Evidently this condition did not exist between humans and other creatures prior to this time. Simultaneously, God specifically allowed humans to eat anything they wanted for food. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you" (Genesis

**NOTES:**

9:3). He placed only *one* restriction concerning what they ate: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Genesis 9:4). Clearly stated, He prohibited humans from eating blood. They were to drain the blood from animals before eating them, and they were not to eat blood after they drained it from an animal.

God's rule regarding humanity's diet was in effect for many years with no changes or alterations. Moses' law brought significant changes to what the Israelites were to eat.

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## UNDER THE LAW

The law of Moses contained many details about what Israel was or was not supposed to eat. We will brief summarize the dietary laws here, but for a thorough discussion, read Leviticus 11:1-47 and Deuteronomy 14:3-21. In these passages of Scripture, we find which animals, fish, and fowl God designated as clean (permissible to eat) and unclean (not permissible to eat).

1. **Animals—**Any animal that chewed the cud and was cloven-footed was clean. The absence of either of these characteristics rendered an animal unclean. Swine, for example, were unclean in Moses' day because they do not chew the cud, though they are cloven-footed. Other rules were also given.

2. **Fish—**For fish to be acceptable to the Israelites for food, they had to have both fins and scales. The absence of either rendered them unclean. Catfish, for example, was unclean under Moses' law because it does not have scales, though it has fins.

3. **Fowl and other flying creatures—**Various fowl were clean, while others were unclean, particularly birds of prey and scavengers. Flying creeping creatures that went upon all fours needed to have legs above their feet in order to be clean (Leviticus 11:21). Other flying creeping things with four feet were unclean.

   Israel had other God-given restrictions to their diet. (See Exodus 22:31; 23:19; Leviticus 3:17; 22:8; Deuteronomy 14:21.) Among them were the following:

   a. Israel was not to eat blood.

   b. Fat was forbidden.

   c. They could not eat anything torn of beasts.

   d. Anything that died of itself was off limits to Israel.

   e. A kid (young goat) could not be boiled in its mother's milk.

**NOTES:**

Strict though they may have been, these rules remained in force until the New Testament era. At that time, God instituted a vast change in diet, which caused upheaval for many, especially Jewish converts.

## UNDER GRACE

Many try to mix dietary rules from the old covenant with teachings of the new covenant. This is both unwise and unscriptural since the New Testament clearly defines the dietary principles for believers today. Let us examine from the Bible what God says to our day regarding what we are to eat or not to eat.

- **The Jerusalem Council** (Acts 15:1-35)—Having heard from God, the apostles instructed Gentile believers to abstain from the following:

  1. **Food offered to idols—**New Testament saints are not to eat such food (I Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:25-33). This was a problem in the first century, and it is in our day also, in certain countries. We can identify three important guidelines in this area.

     a. There is only one God, and an idol is nothing, yet God still forbids Christians to eat food offered to idols. The reason is that doing so could create a stumbling block for weak believers and unbelievers. They may mistakenly think it is acceptable to worship idols.

     b. Whatever is sold in marketplaces, we may eat, asking no question. We are not obligated to ask whether the food we purchase has previously been sacrificed to an idol.

     c. When invited to the home of an unbeliever, we are to eat whatever is set before us, without asking if the food has been offered to an idol. If the host voluntarily informs us that the food was previously offered to an idol, then we are to refuse to eat it.

  2. **Blood—**New Testament saints are forbidden to eat blood. Animal blood is to be properly drained, and it is not to be ingested in any form after it has been drained from the animal. Eating meat cooked rare or medium rare is not a violation, because the animal has been butchered and the blood has been drained as much as possible. Eating meat cooked rare is not done for the sake of eating blood; it is a preference in cooking time or preparation. If eating blood were the motivation, then it would be wrong.

  3. **Things strangled—**They are not to be eaten by members of the New Testament church, because the blood has been retained. Thus, anything choked, drowned, or smothered to death is not acceptable for food.

**NOTES:**

- **Creating Offenses and Stumbling Blocks**—God has granted liberty to Christians to eat or not to eat meat (Romans 14:1-23; I Corinthians 8:13). If our right to do this offends a fellow believer then we are to refrain from eating or drinking whatever offends him. We should never attempt to create an offense; on the other hand, we should not allow ourselves to be offended over what others eat and drink so long as it is biblical. We should have personal convictions, but we must not condemn another believer with an opposing view. It is important to respect our brothers and sisters in Christ who have different customs, traditions, and cultures from us.

- **Erroneous Doctrines**—Numerous false doctrines surface from time to time regarding what we are to eat or not to eat. Commanding to abstain from meats is a doctrine of demons (I Timothy 4:1-6). Teaching people that they cannot eat certain kinds of meat, such as pork or catfish, or that they can only eat certain foods on certain days is unscriptural.

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## SUMMARY

Outside the restrictions noted above, the New Testament does not forbid certain types of vegetables or meat to Christians. We should keep this teaching in mind, as well as the following observations, when deciding to eat or not to eat.

1. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:22-23).

2. "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" (I Corinthians 8:8).

3. "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Romans 14:14).

4. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (I Timothy 4:4-5).

We can easily summarize these four guidelines as follows: (1) We are to eat with faith, believing that we are right. (2) We are not better or worse off in the eyes of God if we eat or do not eat meat. (3) If we esteem something unclean, it becomes that to us. (4) Our food, regardless of what we eat, should be sanctified (blessed) by prayer (Luke 24:30; Acts 27:35).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31).

**LESSON 18**

**NOTES:**

# KNOWING OUR ADVERSARY

## I PETER 5:6-11

Lest Satan take advantage of us (II Corinthians 2:11), let us expose him biblically as our adversary. Any other motivation to study Satan would be wrong. So many devices, objects, and writings in our day exalt the devil in the minds of people. We should not use this time and this space for any other reason than to expose our enemy for who he really is. We hear much about exorcism, devil worship, and Satanism that only tends to exalt the enemy of our soul. Let us beware of such tactics and maneuvers, lest Satan snare us in them.

Christians need to be aware of and on guard against the invading forces of the enemy. This lesson is designed with this view in mind.

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## ORIGIN OF SATAN

God's Word reveals the origin of our adversary. (See Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19; John 8:44; Luke 10:17-20; I John 3:8). Lucifer, the son of the morning, was a beautiful angel whom God created in the beginning to love and worship Him (Colossians 1:15-18). Pride caused him to rebel against God. He then deceived other angels into following him in his rebellion, bringing about their downfall. Cast out of heaven into the earth, Satan has become the enemy of every facet of the work of God. As a fallen creature, he worked through the serpent to beguile Eve in the Garden of Eden (II Corinthians 11:3).

To see his sin, let us note the five "I will's" of Satan (Isaiah 14:12-14):

1. "I will ascend into heaven."

2. "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God."

3. "I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north."

4. "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds."

5. "I will be like the most High."

Lucifer's pride is evident in these statements, and as a result of such pride, he was cast down.

**NOTES:**

## SATAN'S ACCESS INTO HEAVEN

Although Satan is cast out of his place and position in heaven, he still has access to God's presence (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Revelation 12:3-9). As a result, he takes on the role of accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). During the Tribulation, God will totally cast Satan out of heaven into the earth, ending his access to heaven (Revelation 12:3-9). Satan will continue his deception, turning his worst fury upon humanity because he will know his time is short.

Satan accuses us to God by insinuating that our service to God has as its motivation personal gain and well-being. God may allow Satan to afflict us, as he did Job, to prove him wrong, as well as to develop us into better Christian. One day Satan will be bruised under our feet (Romans 16:20). The accuser of the brethren will be cast down, and we will obtain eternal victory over our adversary.

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## WHAT SATAN IS

Satan fills numerous roles in his effort to destroy anyone and everyone he can. Knowing what he is and how he operates helps to forewarn and forearm us.

1. **Destroyer—**David knew how he had been kept from the paths of this destroyer—by the Word of God (Psalm 17:4). God's Word provides the same safety to us; we do not have to be destroyed by the destroyer (I Corinthians 10:10; Mark 9:22).

2. **Tempter—**Satan tempts us to do evil (Matthew 4:3; I Thessalonians 3:5). God does not tempt anyone to do evil; temptation comes about when we are drawn away of our own lust (James 1:12-15).

   When the Bible says God tempted Abraham (Genesis 22:1), it means that God tried or tested him, not that He enticed him to sin (Hebrews 11:17). Temptation has a twofold meaning in the Bible: (1) an enticement to evil or sin; (2) a test or trial that God sends or allows to come for our development.

3. **Liar—**Jesus declared that there is no truth in the devil (John 8:44); he is a liar and the father of lies (Genesis 3:1-5). Satan will lie to us and about us.

4. **Hinderer—**Paul desired to return to Thessalonica to visit the saints there, but Satan hindered him from doing so (I Thessalonians 2:18). Hindrances of every conceivable nature come against us through our adversary.

5. **Murderer—**Jesus said the devil was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). He was not referring to Cain's murder of Abel but to the spiritual and physical death Satan plunged Adam and Even into by tempting them to sin (Romans 5:12-21; Hebrews 2:14-15). Jesus Christ came to destroy the one who had the power of death. Christ now has the keys of death and hell and has

**NOTES:**

brought life and immortality through the gospel (II Timothy 1:10). We have a life giver who has saved us from Satan's murderous tactics!

6. **The god of this world—**People's submission to sin and Satan clearly demonstrate the reality of this title (II Corinthians 4:4). Jesus Christ also called Satan the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Paul referred to him as the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). He was the prince of Persia and Greece in Daniel 10:1-21.

7. **Deceiver—**From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible unfolds the drama of Satan's deceptive acts (I Timothy 2:14; Revelation 12:9; 20:3-10). Our present age witnesses every conceivable form of the devil's deceitfulness.

8. **Accuser—**Satan accused Job to God as serving Him for gain and physical benefits (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). Through his access into heaven, he still accuses the brethren to God (Revelation 12:10).

---

## TITLES FOR OUR ADVERSARY

The following terms are vastly different in some ways, yet they present a complete picture of the one and same adversary.

1. **Lucifer** (Isaiah 14:12-14).

2. **Dragon** (Revelation 12:3, 17).

3. **Satan** (Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:9).

4. **Serpent** (II Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9).

5. **Adversary** (I Peter 5:8; I Timothy 5:14).

6. **Devil** (Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:11; Revelation 12:9).

---

## THINGS SATAN CAN BE LIKE

Satan poses as these, while in reality he is none of them. He only takes on their characteristics in order to accomplish some act of deception and destruction. Identifying his many suits will make him easily recognizable.

1. **Lion—**He roars against the saints, seeking to devour them (I Peter 5:8).

2. **Minister of Righteousness**—Any person who poses as a preacher of righteousness but does not preach the full truth is an instrument of the adversary

**NOTES:**

to lead people astray (II Corinthians 11:14-15). Paul warned us not to accept any other gospel, either from him, from someone else, or from an angel (Galatians 1:8-9).

3. **Angel of Light—**Satan has his angels (Matthew 25:41) and can transform himself as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:13-15; Galatians 1:8-9).

4. **Fowls of the Air**—Like a fowl, the devil comes and catches away the seed (Word of God) that is sown in a person's life (Matthew 13:4-19).

5. **Wolf**—Hiding his true identity in sheep's clothing, he invades the flock of God, causing havoc and trouble (Matthew 10:16; John 10:12).

---

## THINGS SATAN CAN CAUSE

Physical impairment can be brought on by demon possession or oppression. Demon possession means that a person is under complete domination, possession, and control of demons—mentally, spiritually, and physically. Demon possession is not discernible to the human eye; we see it when Satan exposes himself or through discernment of spirit. Some impairments have been pawned off as demon possession when they were not; some impairments have been diagnosed as something else when they were the work of Satan.

In themselves, physical and mental disabilities do not indicate demon possession. Christians can have mental or physical handicaps or be disabled; these conditions do not prevent them from being saved. Saints are not, and will not be, demon possessed, as long as they walk with God. Saying someone has a demon is unfair unless it is a known fact. Believers can become possessed or controlled by the devil only if they continue in sin and turn their lives over to Satan. This will not happen as long as they make a sincere, Bible-based effort to walk with God.

Keep the above instructions in mind while observing from the Bible what can and did happen in some lives who were controlled by Satan. Never fear Satan (Hebrews 2:15), for "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

Satan caused the following things in those he controlled before Christ came and set them free:

1. Muteness (Matthew 9:32-35)
2. Deafness (Mark 9:14-25)
3. Mental derangement (Mark 5:1-19)
4. Lunacy (Matthew 4:24; 17:14-21)
5. Blindness (Matthew 12:22)
6. Vexation (Matthew 15:21-31)

**NOTES:**

I have known many with the above problems who were not under Satan's domination. These examples do show what he can do with a life and body under his control. The enemy inflicts much sorrow, suffering, and pain upon humanity.

---

## GIVING PLACE TO THE DEVIL

Paul warned Christians not to give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27). *Place* in this verse comes from the Greek word *topos,* meaning any portion of space marked off from the surrounding territory. It is used in the sense of opportunity, power, or occasion for acting.

When Christians do something sinful, we know this is not inspired of God. What happens is that saints through temptation, stress, anger, or some weakness act in an unbecoming fashion. Their intentions may be good, but they fail temporarily; they have given place to the devil. We are warned against doing this, but reality tells us that it does happen.

What should Christians do if they have given place to the devil? They are to repent to the extent they have failed; if they have wronged another person or persons, they should seek their forgiveness. If only God knows the failure, they should go to Him only (I John 2:1-2). (Of course, they may want to consult someone in spiritual leadership for instruction, encouragement, and prayer to overcome temptation in the future.) Then they should ask God to strengthen them in their area of weakness so the event will not recur. Regardless of how often we fail, we must never quit.

---

## OUR WEAPONS AGAINST SATAN

Defeating Satan should be the desire of every saint of God. Only by spiritual means and methods can we overcome the enemy of our soul. God has given us every weapon we need to succeed in our conquest.

Satan has doctrines, fiery darts, wiles, and devices, and he tries to use all of them against us (I Timothy 4:1; Ephesians 6:11, 16; II Corinthians 2:11). God has given us the whole armor of God along with other spiritual weapons to defeat our enemy (Ephesians 6:10-18; II Corinthians 10:3-5). His Word is a powerful deterrent to Satan's advances (Matthew 4:1-11). Fasting coupled with prayer can defeat and cast out the most ferocious of demonic powers (Matthew 17:21). We must first submit to God, and then we will be in a spiritual position to resist the devil, causing him to flee from us (James 4:7; I Peter 5:9).

Let us examine our weapons closely, acquaint ourselves with them, learn to use them effectively, and with victory we shall soon bruise Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20).

**NOTES:**

## SATAN'S DESTINY

Satan's doom has been sealed for a long time. He knows that (Matthew 8:28-29), and now we know it from God's Word. God made a promise in Genesis 3:15 that He will ultimately fulfill in Revelation 20:1-10. From this day forward this scenario will unfold for Satan.

Satan will continue his same work, with evil people waxing worse and worse even in our time. During the Tribulation he will be cast out of heaven, losing his access to God's presence to accuse the brethren (Revelation 12:3-9). After the Battle of Armageddon, he will be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-2). When this time has expired, he will be loosed for a short season. He will return to the earth and go forth to deceive the nations and to gather them against the saints. At this juncture, fire will come down from heaven and devour their armies. Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet will already be (Revelation 20:1-10). At this point, he will have reached his eternal destiny.

Satan and his followers have a terrible fate awaiting them. Hell was not prepared for humans, but for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Humans will go to the lake of fire for refusing to obey God's Word, but this does not have to be our fate! God has given us everything we need to defeat our foe. Let us arise and defeat Satan in Jesus' name!

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## NOTES

**LESSON 19**

**NOTES:**

# LIFE AND DEATH

## ACTS 3:12-16; HEBREWS 2:14-15

Confusion reigns in the minds of many on the subject of life and death as taught in the Bible. An in-depth study into the matter should allay fears and heighten hopes, especially for Christians. We have the unprecedented privilege of receiving a spiritual, life-giving experience with God in this age of grace. We also need to be aware of the possibility of being lost and eternally separated from God.

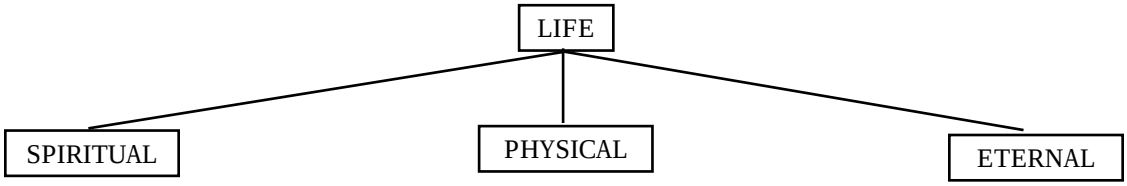
Death in any form is an enemy we all wish to conquer. This can only come through Jesus Christ, the life giver. On any level, life is a beautiful thing to enjoy. We love life so much that one of our main objectives is to obtain eternal life. For this reason, we need to learn the origin and consequences of death and how to find life.

---

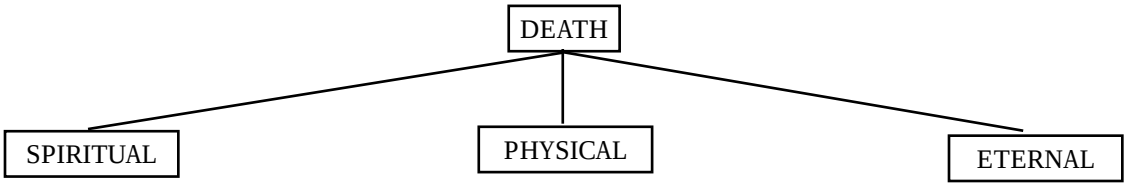
## CATEGORIES OF LIFE AND DEATH

The Word of God reveals three levels or classes of both life and death. It is important to know their origin, extent, and future.

**Life**—The three categories are spiritual life, physical life, and eternal life. In each place where the Bible uses the word *life*, life is the result of a *union*. All three categories of life come through and from Jesus Christ, the almighty God incarnate.




**Death**—The three categories of death are spiritual, physical, and eternal. In each place where the Bible uses the word *death*, it speaks of *separation*. In relation to humans, the word never means ceasing to exist. Regardless of which category of death we examine, its origin goes back to sin and Satan (Romans 5:12-21).



**NOTES:**

## SPIRITUAL DEATH

Spiritual death, or separation from God in the spiritual realm, passed upon humanity long before physical death was known. In the account of creation in Genesis, God placed a minor restriction upon humanity. Just like today, humans did not believe God meant what He said. Because of this doubt and Satan's beguiling tactics (Genesis 3:1-4), the first humans ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, plunging the human race into a state of spiritual separation from God.

God's decree to Adam and Eve was, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). He referred to the restriction of not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Did Adam and Eve die the day they ate the forbidden fruit? Yes. Just because they did not fall over dead physically does not mean they did not die. Theirs was a spiritual death; their souls were separated from God, and the communion that they had enjoyed with Him was destroyed. After his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, Adam lived 930 years before he suffered the sentence of physical death (Genesis 5:5).

Spiritual death, or separation from God, has passed to all humans through Adam our father. Sin is the force that separated Adam and Eve from God, and it separates us from God today (Isaiah 59:1-2). Our sinful nature works to keep us in a state of spiritual death. Separation from God has to do with the human soul and its spiritual condition. In studying the following passages of Scripture, we should keep in mind the context of the verse. The human soul is immortal; it never sleeps or ceases to exist.

1. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). (See also Jeremiah 31:30.) Some interpret this statement to mean that if we live in sin then when we die physically our soul dies. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, God declares, as He did to Adam, that if we sin or rebel against His Word, our soul will die or be separated from God and His covenant promises. Repentance and obedient faith will restore that union, causing the separation or spiritual death to cease (Ezekiel 3:16-21; 18:19-32).

2. In the story of the prodigal son, the father declared upon his son's return, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:24). The boy was never dead physically. He was separated from his father; it was a spiritual death.

3. Converting an erring brother or sister from the error of his or her way will "save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). In no way could this possibly refer to physical death; this is a fellow believer who has been separated from God because of sin.

4. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). (See also Ephesians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:13.) Paul described our condition before we found God through salvation.

5. "For to be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:6). (See also I Timothy 5:6.)

**NOTES:**

Paul described the spiritual condition of the carnally minded person. God does not want us to be apart from Him in our soul and spirit. Jesus gave His life to bring life, or spiritual restoration between God and humans. This malady has a divine remedy.

---

## SPIRITUAL LIFE

Physical life does not indicate spiritual life or that all is well with God. Real life is not just a healthy body, seventy years of existence, plenty of money, and a good time. Life as we desire it is found only in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life.

When we are born again of the water and Spirit (John 3:1-8), receiving the Holy Ghost as the believers did on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 38), then we have spiritual life. Salvation affects the soul's relationship with God. We are rejoined in a spiritual relationship with the Father, which brings life to the inward person. Study the following verses and their relationship to our topic.

1. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14).

2. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

3. "Who delivered us from so great a death" (II Corinthians 1:10).

4. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51).

5. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).

6. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26).

7. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

Spiritual life is the most valuable asset in this world. What do we profit if we gain the whole world and lose our own souls? Abundant life is available through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**NOTES:**

## PHYSICAL DEATH

Physical death is an enemy that will overcome each of us. When we die physically, this is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body (James 2:26). Although our existence on this earth has ended, our souls live on immortally. We are separated from this world and life to be joined to another world and sphere of life. Physical death is the result of the fall of humanity through sin. Both spiritual and physical death have passed upon all humans (Romans 5:12-21).

1. Humans are destined, through the curse placed upon them, to return to the dust of the ground from which they were taken (Genesis 3:19).

2. Because of the disobedience of one man, we were made sinners, with physical death being passed on to us (Romans 5:12-21).

Salvation does not exempt us from physical death, nor does physical death indicate a lack or weakness in our relationship with God. God decreed, "In Adam all die" (I Corinthians 15:22). Physical death is the last enemy Jesus Christ will put under His feet (I Corinthians 15:26).

For this death God has provided a remedy: the resurrection. Someday He will resurrect us from the grave and give us a new body. (See Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:12-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.)

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## PHYSICAL LIFE

None but the infidel or evolutionist would dispute that physical life comes from God. Life's continued daily sustenance is totally dependent upon Him.

1. God created humans in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7).

2. Even our very breath is in the hand of God (Daniel 5:23; Acts 17:25).

3. Job declared that our soul and breath is in the hand of God (Job 12:10).

4. In Him we live, move, and have our being (Acts 17:25-28).

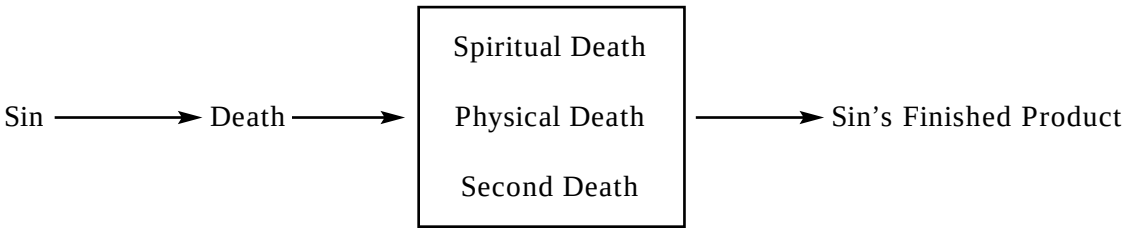
Life as we are momentarily enjoying it depends totally upon God for its continuance. He has given us our physical life as a time to repent and find spiritual life in Him. Let us not waste the years, but remember our Creator in the days of our youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1), remembering the old motto: "Only one life, so soon it will pass; only what's done for Christ will last."

**NOTES:**

## SECOND DEATH

The second death is the saddest and final category of death that can be meted out to humans. For spiritual death there is the remedy of the Holy Ghost. For physical death there is the remedy of the resurrection. For the second death there is no remedy; it is final and eternal. Satan is the perpetrator of every form of death, and he will share his portion of this one.

1. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). Sin, unrepented of, eventually brings us to the second death.




2. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Revelation 2:11).

3. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (Revelation 20:6).

4. Death and hell are cast into the lake of fire; this constitutes the second death (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8). This will be the eternal abode of the lost.

From this sentence there is no reprieve or remedy. The inhabitants of the lake of fire are forever separated from God, beyond the reach of His mercy and grace. This is the final destiny of the lost, Satan, the Beast, and the false prophet.

---

## ETERNAL LIFE

Eternal life is the inheritance of the saved. None of the categories of death can invade it. Saints of every age will enjoy this eternal privilege of personally dwelling in the presence of Jesus Christ forever. God will prepare a new heaven and a new earth as a habitation for all who obtain this glorious status.

After the Tribulation, Christ will set up His kingdom on this earth for a thousand years. When this time is over, Satan will be loosed from the bottomless pit for a season and then cast into the lake of fire for eternity. Christ will sit with His church at the White Throne Judgment, judging humans and angels. Upon the completion of this judgment, He will cast the doomed into the lake of fire, which is the second death, or final, eternal separation from God. The saved will then inhabit the new heaven and the new earth. We will enjoy eternal life, without interruption, forever (Romans 5:21; I Timothy 6:12-19; I John 2:25). Let us notice the blessings and benefits of those who receive eternal life:

**NOTES:**

1. We come forth to the resurrection of life (John 5:28-29).

2. We shall be like Him (I John 3:1-3).

3. We shall be clothed upon with our house from heaven (II Corinthians 5:1-4).

4. We will be crowned with a crown of life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).

5. We will go to the place He has gone to prepare for us (John 14:1-3).

6. We will enjoy the indescribable glories foretold in Revelation 21-22.

Soon physical death will separate us from our families and this earth. For the saved this death does not diminish their spiritual life in Christ or their hope of eternal life. For a while they will sleep in Jesus, but those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake to everlasting life (Daniel 12:2). Our Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of an archangel, and the trump of God. The physically dead will rise first, and then we who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be forever with Him (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Let us make this our goal!

---

**NOTES**

**LESSON 20**

**NOTES:**

# THE GODHEAD
# PART 1

## ROMANS 1:16-20

Conflicting beliefs concerning the Godhead abound in our day. Our only alternative is to turn to the Word of God for the proper answer. Since recorded history began, pagan ideas have been the rule of many religions, as humans seek to understand and know God. We desperately need a Bible answer concerning the Godhead in order to exalt Him to His rightful position.

Christians receive some of their greatest opposition from religious circles when they exalt Christ to His rightful position. Because of the popular acceptance of the trinitarian doctrine, when we declare from the Bible there is only one God, opposition can be our lot. Researching the doctrine of the Godhead is important to all who want to be saved.

In Christianity, there is widespread acceptance of the doctrine of the trinity, which holds that there are three distinct (some say separate) persons in the Godhead, who are coequal, coeternal, and coessential. It is our individual responsibility toward God to identify properly our object of worship. Paul declared, "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Since we are without excuse concerning the Godhead, it behooves us to study and to understand this subject properly.

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## TYPES OF BELIEF ABOUT GOD

The following four definitions cover every religious belief worldwide in relation to the concept of God or gods:

1. **Polytheism**—belief in many gods.

2. **Monotheism**—belief in one God.

3. **Atheism**—belief in no God.

4. **Trinitarianism**—belief in three distinct persons in the Godhead—a belief that tends toward tritheism, that is, a belief in three Gods.

The Jewish people, from Abraham's day until now, are monotheistic in their belief. Although they believe in one God, they deny that God manifested Himself in Jesus Christ, thereby denying the deity of Jesus Christ. God's Word teaches us the following

**NOTES:**

truths, however: (1) Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, meaning God with us (Matthew 1:23). (2) Jesus is God manifested in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16; John 1:1-14). (3) God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). May these marvelous truth be revealed to the Jewish community and to all who deny that Jesus Christ is the one and only true God.

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## OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING ABOUT GOD

The Old Testament abounds with conclusive and undeniable teachings that there is only one God. Hundreds of scriptural passages bear witness to the truth of the oneness of God. Space prohibits listing them all; therefore, we will give only a few references. Personal research is a must on the Godhead; I challenge you to the task.

1. Deuteronomy 6:4
2. Exodus 3:13-14; Isaiah 43:10-25
3. Isaiah 41:4; Revelation 1:17; 22:13
4. Isaiah 44:6-8
5. Isaiah 45:5-7, 18, 21-23
6. Malachi 2:10
7. Zechariah 14:9
8. Isaiah 9:6
9. Isaiah 46:9-10
10. Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-6

The late C. P. Kilgore, a famous pioneer Pentecostal minister, compiled *Wheel of Prophecy*, a comparative tract about the Godhead which demonstrates from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ of the New Testament is the God of the Old Testament incarnate. This tract continues to be printed by Word Aflame Press. Study this compilation of comparative verses that so forcefully prove the true identity of Jesus Christ.

---

## NOTES

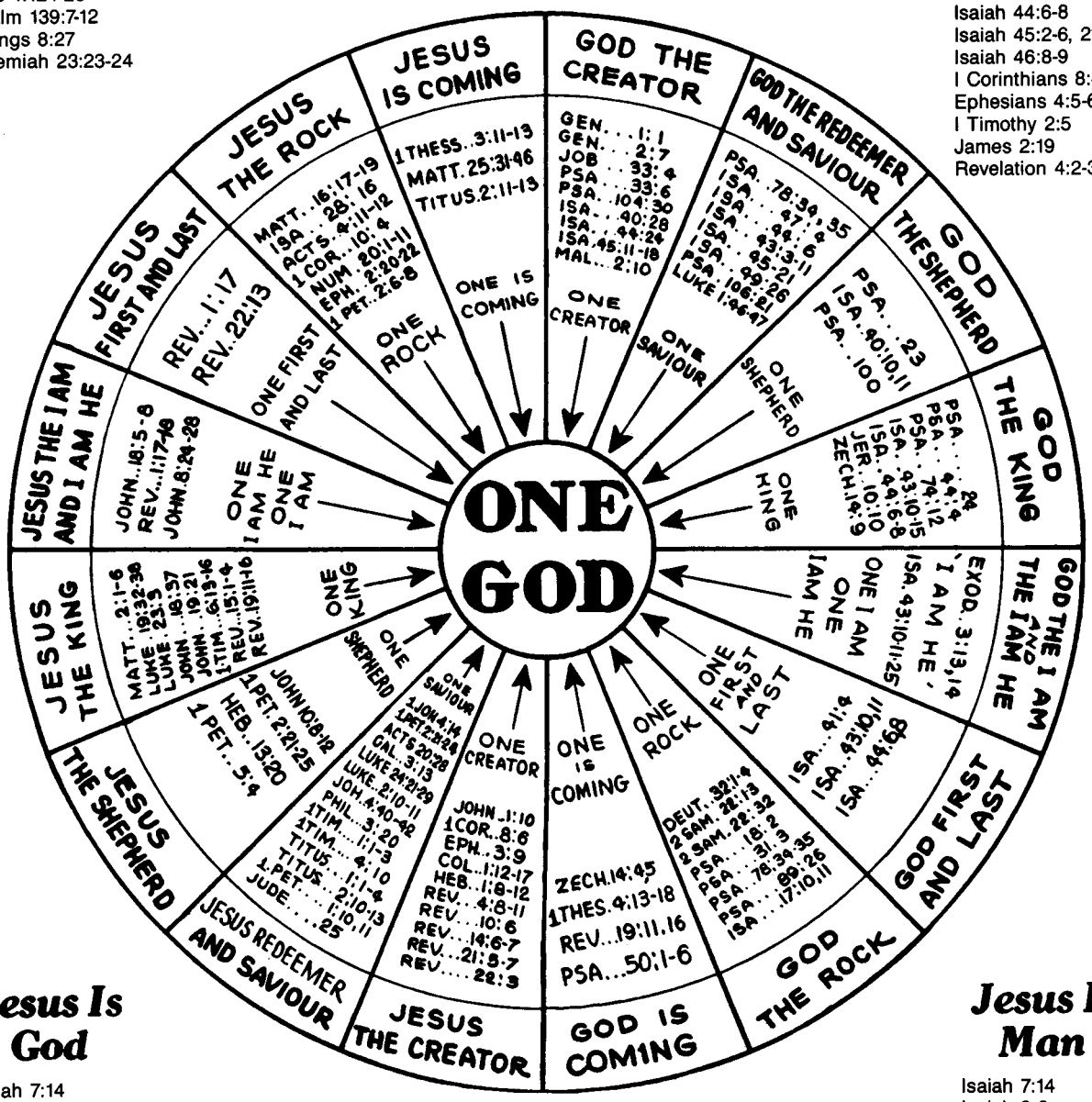
# WHEEL OF PROPHECY
# WHO IS GOD?

## *God Is a Spirit*

John 4:23-24
Acts 7:48-49
Acts 17:24-28
Psalm 139:7-12
I Kings 8:27
Jeremiah 23:23-24

## *There Is But One God*

Deuteronomy 6:4-9
Mark 12:28-34
Malachi 2:10
Isaiah 44:6-8
Isaiah 45:2-6, 21-23
Isaiah 46:8-9
I Corinthians 8:4-6
Ephesians 4:5-6
I Timothy 2:5
James 2:19
Revelation 4:2-3




## *Jesus Is God*

Isaiah 7:14
Isaiah 9:6
Micah 5:2
John 1:1, 14
John 1:10
John 8:24, 58-59
John 14:6-11
II Corinthians 5:19
I Timothy 3:16

## *Jesus Is Man*

Isaiah 7:14
Isaiah 9:6
Luke 1:31; 2:6-7
Acts 17:31
Galatians 4:4
Philippians 2:7-8
I Timothy 2:5
Hebrews 4:15
Hebrews 7:24-25


Compiled by C. P. KILGORE

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**NOTES:**

## NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ABOUT GOD

God, who never changes (Malachi 3:6), did not change His substance, nature, and essence in the New Testament. By manifesting Himself in flesh (I Timothy 3:16), God did not in any way indicate that He consists of a plurality of persons. The following New Testament passages coincide with the Old Testament and prove beyond doubt that there is only one God.

1. John 1:1-4
2. II Corinthians 5:19
3. I Timothy 3:16
4. John 8:24, 58
5. Mark 12:28-34
6. Ephesians 4:5
7. John 14:6-11
8. I Corinthians 8:4-6
9. Matthew 23:9
10. I Timothy 2:5
11. Philippians 2:5-11
12. Colossians 2:8-10
13. James 2:19
14. I John 5:7-8
15. Revelation 4:2
16. Revelation 1:8, 18

In addition to these verses, numerous direct statements in the Bible verify the oneness of God in Christ. People today struggle with Christ's deity, just as they did when He declared that He was before Abraham and that Abraham saw His day and rejoiced (John 8:56-59; Genesis 18:1-22). Jesus' statement to Nicodemus was equally confounding, as He declared Himself to be in heaven and on earth simultaneously (John 3:13). Christ was also the rock that followed Israel in the wilderness (I Corinthians 10:4).

Statements of this nature confuse those who do not understand the Godhead. We can understand God's basic identity, for Romans 1:20 says we are without excuse if we do not acknowledge His eternal power and Godhead. We should quit trying to make three distinct persons out of the one God. Instead, we should accept the Word of the Lord, which teaches that there is only one God and only one person who is God, namely, Jesus Christ.

God's Word teaches us what God is:

1. God is a Spirit (John 4:24).
2. God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).
3. God is love (I John 4:8).
4. God is light (I John 1:5).

God, who is a Spirit, moved on the virgin Mary, causing her to conceive and bring forth Jesus Christ. God, who is invisible, inhabited and dwelt in the man Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:15-19; 2:8-10; Philippians 2:5-10)—fully, completely, and entirely. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Son of Man simultaneously. Jesus is not a new God, another God, or a second person of the Godhead. He is Jehovah God of the Old Testament manifested in the person of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 3:16). No change or variation exists in God because of this manifestation. It is essential for us to believe that Jesus is the I Am, or we will die in our sins (John 8:24).

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**LESSON 21**

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# THE GODHEAD
# PART 2

## ROMANS 1:16-20

Part 1 surveyed some basic scriptural truths pertaining to the Godhead. Now we will examine some specific terms and titles relative to our study.

Confusion about the Godhead stems from the inability to differentiate between a *manifestation* of God and the *person* of God. God was *manifest* in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16). Jesus Christ in the flesh is the express image of His *person* (Hebrews 1:3). God spoke in various ways in the past but has chosen to speak to us in these last days by His Son, who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Widely taught and accepted in Christendom is the concept of three distinct persons in the Godhead. According to this teaching, there is a person of the Father, a person of the Son, and a person of the Holy Ghost. These persons are coequal, coeternal, and coessential, and together form the Godhead. Proponents of this teaching affirm that although there are three persons in the Godhead, there is only one God. Such terminology is confusing both intellectually and scripturally. God's Word, rather than tradition, must be the final authority on such important matters.

Examining every manifestation of God in the Bible would be impossible at this time, but it is important for us to study the more basic ones. Let us open our hearts as we open our Bibles to study our great God.

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## FATHER

In reference to God, the Bible uses the word *Father* in two easily distinguishable ways.

1. As the Creator or Father of all humanity and creation, God is properly called our Father. When we pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9), or when we refer to God as our "heavenly Father" (Matthew 6:26, 32), we use the word in this sense. God, eternal and never changing, is the Father of all creation and humanity in that He is the fountainhead and source from which all creation and humanity came.

2. All Christendom agrees to the scriptural truth that God is the Father of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost moved on the virgin Mary, causing her to conceive and bring forth the Son of God (Jesus Christ). This event makes God, who is the Holy Ghost, the Father of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25). Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16). God has no other son who was begotten or

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born of a woman. Jesus Christ is the only offspring of God through the process of conception, development, and physical birth.

Note: We should note that the Bible does refer to God's family, or the church, as sons of God and begotten of God in a spiritual sense. This description highlights our spiritual relationship with God and in no way refers to a physical birth process like that of Jesus Christ. Through this spiritual birth we become brothers and sisters in Christ (II Corinthians 6:18; Philippians 2:15; I Peter 1:22-25; I John 3:1).

Scripture demands that we recognize God as Father, since the Holy Ghost caused the conception of Jesus Christ. God bears record in heaven as the Father, specifically as the Father of the man Christ Jesus. His being a Father is simply a role, manifestation, or a means of self-revelation. Father is not His name as some try to conclude from Matthew 28:19; this title simply denotes one of His roles as God.

Proponents of trinitarianism envision the Father as the first person in the Godhead sending His Son, the second person in the Godhead, to become the Savior of the world. They further believe that the Father and Son sent the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Godhead, to become the Comforter. Such teaching is unscriptural in that the man Christ Jesus did not preexist as a person before Bethlehem. God, who is a Spirit, did not beget a son in the flesh before Bethlehem. Jesus Christ was not another God coming into existence but the one true God manifesting Himself in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16).

God's Fatherhood should not be confusing to us. God has not changed; He has not created another God. He is the same eternally. God, as a Spirit, begot the man Christ Jesus and dwelled in him fully in order to become our Savior (Isaiah 43:10-13; 44:6-8; 45:5-6; Colossians 1:19; 2:9). God is one being, not three persons, and Jesus is the incarnation of the one true God (Ephesians 4:5).

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## SON

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not another God, or a second person in the Godhead. He is the one true God manifested in the flesh. The Bible never calls Jesus "God the Son," neither does it call Mary "the Mother of God." Jesus is God, and in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 1:19; 2:9).

God moved on the virgin Mary, causing her to conceive and to give birth to Jesus Christ. God, who is Spirit, lived in the body of Jesus Christ entirely and completely. Jesus was the temple or tabernacle of almighty God. He was flesh because Mary was His mother; therefore, He is called the Son of Man (humanity). Since God was the Father of the man, He is called the Son of God. Jesus is God because there is only one God, and the one God was entirely resident in the person of Jesus Christ.

Since Jesus was both God and man, He possessed a full, complete, and entire human nature of body, soul, and spirit. As God, He has power to forgive sins (Matthew 9:1-8),

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heal the sick (Matthew 8:1-17), raise the dead (John 11:1-44), and walk on water (Matthew 14:22-33; Job 9:8). As a man, He hungered (Matthew 21:18), became thirsty (John 4:6), and faced temptation (Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15). When Jesus referred to His Father, it was the man acknowledging the Spirit that begot Him. When Jesus prayed, it was not one divine person praying to another divine person; it was the man praying to God.

Flesh and Spirit exist simultaneously in the person of Jesus Christ. Distinguishing between flesh and Spirit is important to understanding the Godhead. We cannot make flesh spirit, nor can we make spirit flesh (John 1:14). The flesh houses or tabernacles the Spirit, and the Spirit works through the flesh.

Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer from sin (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 2:11; John 4:42; I Timothy 4:10; I John 4:14). He has all power in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18), and before Him every knee will bow and every tongue will confess (Philippians 2:5-11; Romans 14:11). When we acknowledge Him, we have the Father; when we deny Him, we do not have either (I John 2:23). Jesus is the revealed name of God (John 5:43; 14:26; 16:23-24), we are baptized in His name (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-5), and He is the one who is coming for the church (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Volumes could be written about Him (John 20:30; 21:25), and should be, because of who He is. Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, deserves our love, worship, and adoration.

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## HOLY GHOST

God's Word teaches that the Holy Ghost is the Father of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35). God is a Spirit (John 4:24). There is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4-6). By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (I Corinthians 12:13), and the Lord is that Spirit (II Corinthians 3:17). We conclude from these passages of Scripture that God is the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, and that there is only one God or one Spirit.

The Bible does not teach, or in any way indicate, that the Holy Ghost was created, was born, was called into existence, or emanated out of God. The Holy Ghost has always existed; the Holy Ghost is God, and God is the Holy Ghost. The term Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is a descriptive title and manifestation of the one true God.

The title "Holy Ghost" comes into prominent usage in the New Testament, first as the Father of Jesus Christ and second as the Comforter given to New Testament believers on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). God, as the Holy Ghost, has always existed but is manifested to the world more significantly in the New Testament.

John the Baptist first heralded the coming of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, or God indwelling humans through His Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). When Christ, the Spirit baptizer, appeared on the scene, He confirmed John's teaching and promised His followers that they would receive the Holy Ghost (John 3:1-8; 14:15-18,

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26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:4-8).

Christ's promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, as about 120 believers were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them the utterance (Acts 2:1-4). New Testament believers received the Holy Ghost as evidenced by speaking with other tongues, and multitudes around the globe still receive this experience.

From the Scripture it is evident that the Holy Ghost is exactly what the term implies—the Spirit of God (John 4:24). It is beautiful that God can dwell in our hearts through His Spirit, the Holy Ghost. What a comfort to know that we not only have God *with* us but *in* us!

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## TERMS

In reference to the Godhead, we encounter many terms, some scriptural, some unscriptural. Some terms are erroneous and should not be used in reference to God. Others clarify, give glory, and give insight into the nature and deity of God. Here are a few.

- **Son of God**—In the most basic sense, Jesus Christ is the Son of God because God was the Father of the man. The Holy Ghost caused the virgin Mary to conceive and bring forth Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35). The Bible never refers to Jesus as God the Son, only as the Son of God, and there is a vast difference in these terms. The Holy Ghost did not father another God; He fathered the man Christ Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, that is, God Himself incarnate. This is why Jesus could declare, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9), and "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

- **Son of Man**—Jesus Christ is called the Son of Man (humanity) because He was born of the virgin Mary. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary had other children (Matthew 13:55-56), making them half-brothers and sisters of Jesus. From Mary, and Mary alone, Jesus derived His humanity. He had no earthly father; His Father was the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:18-25). Search these and other passages of Scripture on the Son of Man: Matthew 16:13-18; 18:11; Mark 2:10; 6:3; John 3:12-14; 5:18-47; Galatians 4:4; Revelation 1:13; 14:14.

  Son of Man and Son of God are different titles for the same person. Though not synonymous, these terms depict and describe our Lord in two distinct but important roles.

- **Eternal Sonship**—A self-contradictory term used by trinitarians to define the Sonship of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ is the Son (and He is), His Sonship could not be eternal; there had to be a conception and birth for there to be a Son. The Spirit is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), but the Sonship of Christ began at Bethlehem. Although the manifestation of God in the flesh was foreordained before the foundation of the world, the man (Son) Christ Jesus did not exist

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before Bethlehem. Sonship indicates and necessitates subordination, inferiority, humanity, and time, and all these are found in the Scripture in relationship to the man Christ Jesus. (See Luke 1:35; 2:10-16; Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:4-7; II Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 1:1-14; I Peter 1:18-20.)

- **Mediatorship of Jesus Christ**—God is light (I Timothy 6:14-16; I John 1:5) and Spirit (John 4:24); therefore, humans cannot approach such glory and radiance. God is high and holy, and we are sinful. Thus we cannot simply approach Him and have a relationship, because our impurity alienates us from His purity. We need a mediator, a go-between, who can mediate between us and God and bring reconciliation and peace. Jesus Christ, as perfect man and perfect God, has become our one and only mediator, reconciling us to God through His incarnation (II Corinthians 5:17-21).

The following five terms depict our Savior in His relationship to each of us when we need help and assistance. Study them carefully.

1. **Mediator**—When the Bible speaks of Jesus as standing or sitting on the right hand of God, it means a position and place of authority, power, and majesty. The metaphor always indicates His mediatorial work, not a place of inferiority. (See Exodus 15:6; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; Revelation 3:21.) There is only *one* mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5). Through Jesus Christ, we can go directly to God for ourselves; we do not have to go through anyone else to reach Him.

2. **Intercessor**—This term refers to someone who approaches a king. Jesus Christ is our intercessor, interceding on our behalf (Isaiah 53:12; 59:16-21; Romans 8:32-34; Hebrews 7:25).

3. **High Priest**—The Old Testament priests offered up to God an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people. Christ became both our high priest and atoning sacrifice (Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 7:24-26; 9:11; 10:21).

4. **Advocate**—This word in Greek means someone called to our side to undertake and champion our cause. In secular use, it meant a friend of the accused called to speak of and to defend his character, while seeking the sympathy of the judge (I John 2:1).

5. **Propitiation**—One who propitiates wins or regains the goodwill of one person toward another. Christ fills this role in our lives (I John 2:1-2; Romans 3:24-25).

The manifestation of God in the flesh is such a beautiful truth (I Timothy 3:16). The Incarnation brought God to our realm and level of suffering; Christ was made like His brethren (humans). Therefore, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 2:9-18; 4:14-15). Since He has lived among us, He knows how to help us (Romans 8:1-3; Philippians 2:5-11). His flesh is the rent veil, and through it we

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approach the holiness of God for mercy and grace to help in the time of need (Matthew 27:50-51; Hebrews 4:15-16; 6:18-20; 10:19-20.).

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## CONCLUSION

Those who have misused the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19 (which is explained in Acts 2:38) have tried to develop a triune God, consisting of three distinct coeternal, coexistent, and coequal persons. But Jesus Christ is not in the Godhead; the Godhead is in Christ (Colossians 2:9). Jesus is God manifested in the flesh, who ascended into the heavens and is coming again for His church (I Timothy 3:16; Acts 1:11).

Jesus Christ, the only true God, deserves our highest praise, our deepest dedication, and best of service. Let us exalt Him to His rightful place as Lord of all!

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## NOTES

**LESSON 22**

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# THE GODHEAD
# PART 3

## ROMANS 1:16-20

Our study of the Godhead will now focus upon the historical development of the trinitarian doctrine, since we have studied the scriptural perspective of the oneness of God in Christ. Since about A.D. 100 many ideas and teachings concerning the Godhead have been injected into the stream of Christianity. Some of them contain elements of truth but not full scriptural truth about the Godhead. Many of these teachings are a result of lack of communication, limited access to the Scriptures, educational and cultural backgrounds, language barriers, limited travel, and lack of freedom of worship. Most of these ideas were espoused by people who were searching for truth and righteousness and who had no intention of corrupting the truth. Nevertheless, errors, which began small, grew into gross proportions. A fresh look at some of these things from a historical perspective will give us a renewed appreciation for freedom and access to the Bible.

Shortly after the apostolic age, many heresies developed. Some things condemned as heresy were indeed heresy, but others were not. We will examine some of these teachings along with the creeds that developed during this time.

We must keep in mind the limited accessibility to Scripture in ancient times. Printing had not been invented, travel and mail delivery were slow, and many conveniences of today were nonexistent. Persecution was rampant and often severe. Roman emperors persecuted the early Christians. Later the Roman Catholic Church horribly persecuted those who disagreed with it. Millions died for their faith during the Dark Ages and the bloody Inquisition by the Roman church. Such acts as copying the Bible into one's native language brought punishment and death.

We thank God for the Reformation that finally broke the back of the Dark Ages, the Renaissance that brought a revival of learning, and the eventual settling of America that gave its citizens freedom of worship. Men and women who braved the storms of opposition before us to translate the Bible in our language, to employ the printing press, and to bring the Word of God to us in this hour deserve our honor.

Let us step back through history to the New Testament church age. From there we will proceed through the developments surrounding the church, finally arriving at our day.

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## EARLY CHURCH

Jesus Christ promised, while on earth, to build a church against which the gates of hell could not prevail (Matthew 16:18). True to His promise, this church began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and quickly spread through the then-known world. The

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apostles and preachers of the early church preached and practiced faith toward God, repentance, water baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ, and receiving the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking with other tongues (Acts 2, 8, 10, 19).

Accompanying these fundamentals was the teaching that Jesus Christ was God manifested in the flesh, reconciling the world to Himself (I Timothy 3:16; II Corinthians 5:19). Parts 1 and 2 of this study on the Godhead give full scriptural documentation to this fact. Not once did the apostles or New Testament writers mention a trinity or acknowledge more than one person in the Godhead.

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## SPIRITUAL DECLINE

Along with these settled truths, God inspired these men to write and warn their day and ours of false teachings that would arise—dividing, spoiling, and deceiving many. Before their task of recording the New Testament was complete, this decline had begun. As the church grew and moved into cultures filled with paganism and idolatry, time removed them further and further from the earthly ministry of Christ and the birth of the church. Lukewarmness and spiritual deterioration set in as a result of this time lapse as well as from the things mentioned in the introduction of this lesson.

Not everyone fell from grace or was deceived. God had, has always had, and will always have His true church in the earth until He returns. Many stayed true to the teachings of the apostles and teachings of the New Testament. The sad fact remains that those in error became the prominent men of whom history and the political world leave us record. True believers became obscured by these prominent figures while being persecuted to death by some of them.

Political leaders embraced religion in order to gain popularity. Pagan practices were incorporated into church services and then taught and practiced as though they were scriptural. Such a climate fostered false doctrine, deviations from truth, and error that became so entrenched in the minds and writings of people that they not only influenced their day but ours as well. Perhaps this history will stir us once again to search out, and contend for, the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

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## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITARIANISM

Unscriptural teachings found their way into the early church, overthrowing the faith of some, while causing others to err from the faith (I Timothy 6:20-21; II Timothy 2:15-18). People who denied that Christ had come in the flesh, thereby manifesting the spirit of antichrist, existed before the death of the apostle John. (See I John 2:18; 4:1-6.) Such teachings grew and expanded until history revealed many distorted views concerning the Godhead.

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Long before the beginning of the church on the Day of Pentecost, the idea or concept of a trinity of deities existed, as we note in the following quotation:

> A trinity of deities is common to all nations; the Emperor of China offers once every year a sacrifice to the Spirit of Trinity and Unity. Laotse (600 B.C.) says, "Tao is by nature one; the first begat the second; both together brought forth the third; these three made all things." We are more familiar with the Indian Trimurti, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, who are represented and worshipped as three persons, though the origin Divine principle Brahma is but one. In a commentary on the Rig-Veda it is said: "There are three deities, but there is only one Godhead, the great soul." The so-called Chaldean oracle says, "The Unity brought forth the Duality which dwells with it and shines in intellectual light; from these proceeded the Trinity, Anos, Illinois, and Aos." In like manner we find a Divine Trinity among the Babylonians (Ulomus, Ulosurus, Elirn) and the Egyptians (Kneph, or Ammun, Pthath, and Osiris). The divinities of Greece are grouped by mythologers both in a successive (Uranas, Chronos, Aeus) and a simultaneous Trinity (Aeus, Poseidon, Aidoneus). So, too, among the Scandinavians (Thor, Woden, Fricco), the ancient Prussians, the Pomeranians, the Wends, and the old Americans. Do not all these coincidences serve as an indirect proof to compel us to acknowledge that Schelling was right when he said, "The philosophy of mythology proves that a Trinity of Divine potentialities is the root from which have grown the religious ideas of all nations of any importance that are known to us"? This idea does not exist because there is such a thing as Christianity; on the contrary, Christianity exists because this ideal is the most original of all.[1]

While such teaching existed prior to the New Testament church age, it in no way influenced the apostles to teach any doctrine other than Jesus Christ as the one true God. Early Christian writers taught that there was one God, while some allowed fanciful ideas and explanations to separate them further and further from biblical truth. In explaining the Godhead, many were influenced by pagan beliefs and incorporated them into their teachings.

Trinitarianism was not quickly accepted as a teaching and doctrine of any church. Eventually, however, as people endeavored to explain the doctrine of God, terms such as *trinity* began to be heard.

## FIRST RECORDED USE OF *TRINITY*

Honesty in handling the Scriptures and fairness toward those who teach the trinitarian doctrine are of utmost concern at this juncture. Therefore, we will carefully document our statements, both scripturally and historically. After diligent research, we cannot find the use of the word *trinity* prior to Theophilus of Antioch.

An early apologist of Christianity from Antioch, Theophilus wrote an epistle to Autolycus defending his own Christianity. He made the following statement about A.D. 180: "In like

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manner also the three days which were before the luminaries, are types of the Trinity of God and His Word and His wisdom."[2] Historians have noted, "Theophilus of Antioch (180) is the first to denote the relation of the three divine persons by the term Triad."[3] A trinitarian historian has argued that his use indicates even earlier use:

> The earliest use of this word Trinity. It seems to have been used by this writer (Theophilus), in his lost works, also; and, as a learned friend suggests, the use he makes of it is familiar. He does not lug it in as something novel: "types of the Trinity," he says, illustrating an accepted word, not introducing a new one.[4]

In the third and fourth centuries, many noted writers tried to define the doctrine of God. Some, such as Tertullian and then Origen, declared a belief in one God but also promoted a theory of three divine persons.

An example of strong trinitarian ideas is found in the writings of Gregorius Thaumaturgus. Gregorius, a bishop of Neo-Caesarea, whose title Thaumaturgus means "wonder worker," wrote about A.D. 270 on the subject of the trinity. He was a pupil of Origen, who was also a proponent of the triad theory.

> A perfect Trinity, not divided nor differing in glory and eternity and sovereignty. Neither, indeed is there anything created or subservient in the Trinity nor introduced, as though not there before or coming in afterward; nor, indeed has the Son ever been without the Father, nor the Spirit without the Son, but the Trinity is ever the same, unvarying and unchangeable.[5]

Controversies surrounding the Godhead raged in these early centuries with lines finally drawn between the teachings of two men, Arius and Athanasius. Arius was born around A.D. 256, lived in Alexandria, Egypt, and died in A.D. 336. Athanasius was born about A.D. 293, lived in Alexandria, Egypt, and died in A.D. 373. Both men were prominent in their times. Arius was a priest, and Athanasius was a deacon and later a bishop. Debate raged so hotly between their respective beliefs that Constantine the Great, the emperor of Rome, called the Council of Nicaea. This council met at the city of Nice, or Nicaea, in Asia Minor in A.D. 325, with 318 bishops forming the first general or ecumenical council.[6] In reality neither Arius nor Athanasius believed in the oneness of God as the Bible teaches, although some at the council apparently did. The teachings of Arius are summed up in the following statement:

> The Father alone is God; therefore, he alone is unbegotten, eternal, wise, good, and unchangeable, and is separated by an infinite chasm from the world. He cannot create the world directly, but only through an agent, the Logos. The Son of God is preexistent before all creatures, and above all creatures, a middle being between God and the world, the creator of the world, the perfect image of the Father, and the executor of his thoughts, and thus capable of being called in a metaphorical sense God and Logos and Wisdom. But on the other hand, he himself is a creature, this is to say, the first creation of God, through whom the Father called other creatures into existence; he was created out of nothing (not out of the essence of God), by the will of the Father before all conceivable time; he is therefore not eternal, but had a beginning, and there was a time when he was not.[7]

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The Council of Nicaea rejected Arianism and adopted a statement that partially supported the trinitarian ideas of Athanasius. Nevertheless, Arianism flourished after the Council of Nicaea, with his doctrine being held in prominence among pastors. Debate continued between the followers of Arius and Athanasius with both men at one time or another being banished and then restored to favor.

When Theodosius I (A.D. 379-95) became emperor of Rome, he soon after called the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. Here the creed that was developed at the Council of Nicaea was expanded to include the deity of the Holy Ghost and to teach that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were three persons in the Godhead. The Nicene Creed in use today is based largely on these two councils.

Following the Council of Constantinople, and as early as July 381, a law was enacted that all churches be given up to bishops who believed in the equal divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Public worship by heretics, as the growing Roman Catholic Church termed Arius and others, was forbidden.[8] Because the political power of the emperor was behind it, this edict was eventually implemented to a great degree. Trinitarianism, the doctrine embraced by Athanasius and the developing Roman Catholic Church, was promoted until all who did not subscribe to it were branded as heretics, becoming the object of excommunication, persecution, and at times even death. Three very popular creeds, given below, express trinitarian doctrine.

1. The Apostles' Creed is ascribed by some to the apostles, but in reality it developed over a period of several years, and the author is unknown. In its present form, it cannot be traced beyond the close of the fifth century A.D.[9] Although the actual language of this creed is not explicitly trinitarian, some of its phrases are commonly interpreted in trinitarian ways.

2. The Nicene Creed has its basis in the councils of A.D. 325 and 381 and is in popular use today.[10]

3. Although accredited to Athanasius, the Athanasian Creed developed over time, borrowing clauses and statements from several men and creeds. Although it is the heart of the trinitarian doctrine, its origin is obscure. Since the seventeenth century, Catholic and Protestant historians have abandoned Athanasian authorship for the creed that bears his name.[11]

- **Apostles' Creed**

  I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only (begotten) Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell [hades, spirit-world]; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church; the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body (flesh); and the life everlasting. Amen.[12]

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- **Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost, and of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified for us, under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried; and rose again the third day according to the Scripture; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. I believe in one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead; and the life of the world to come. Amen.[13]

- **Athanasian Creed**

1. Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith:

2. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

3. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

4. Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance (Essence).

5. For there is one Person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost.

6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

7. Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.

8. The Father uncreate (uncreated): the Son uncreate (uncreated): and the Holy Ghost uncreate (uncreated).

9. The Father incomprehensible (unlimited): the Son incomprehensible (unlimited): and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible (unlimited, or infinite).

10. The Father eternal: the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal.

**NOTES:**

11. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal.

12. And also there are not three uncreated: nor three incomprehensibles (infinites), but one uncreated: and one incomprehensible (infinite).

13. So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

14. And yet they are not three almighties: but one Almighty.

15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God.

16. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.

17. So likewise the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.

18. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.

19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord:

20. So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, There be (are), three Gods, or three Lords.

21. The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten.

22. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, nor begotten.

23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten: but proceeding.

24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts

25. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, nor less than another (there is nothing before, or after; nothing greater or less)

26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal, and coequal

27. So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshiped.

28. He therefore that will be saved, must (let him) thus think of the Trinity.

29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly (faithfully) the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

30. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus

**NOTES:**

Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

31. God, of the Substance (Essence) of the Father; begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance (Essence) of his Mother, born in the world.

32. Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

33. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood.

34. Who although he be (is) God and Man; yet his is not two, but one Christ.

35. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by taking (assumption) of the Manhood into God.

36. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance (Essence): but by unity of Person.

37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ;

38. Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell (Hades, spirit-world): rose again the third day from the dead.

39. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right of the Father God (God the Father) Almighty.

40. From whence (thence) he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

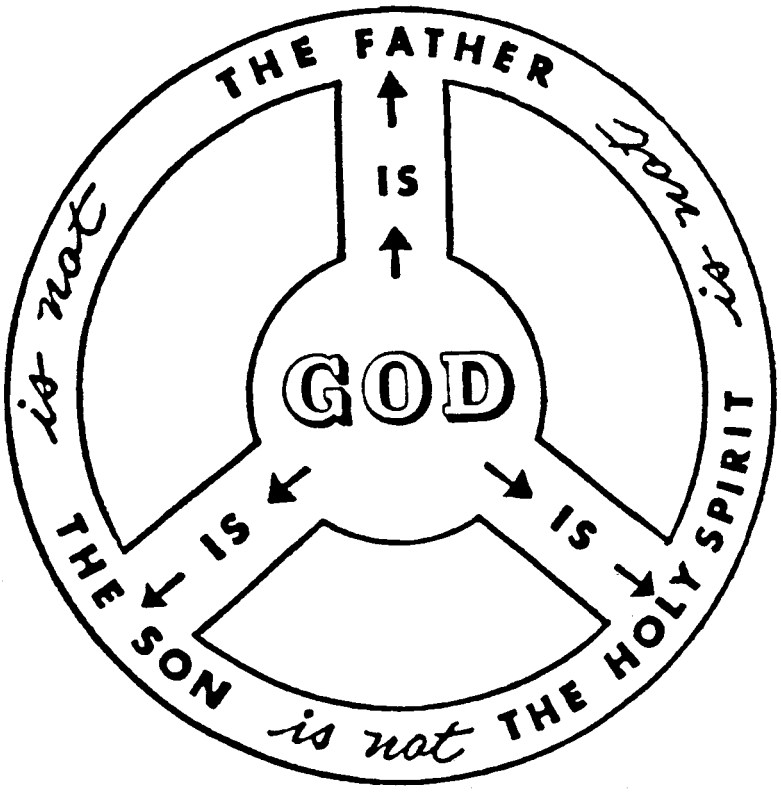
41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;

42. And shall give account for their own works.

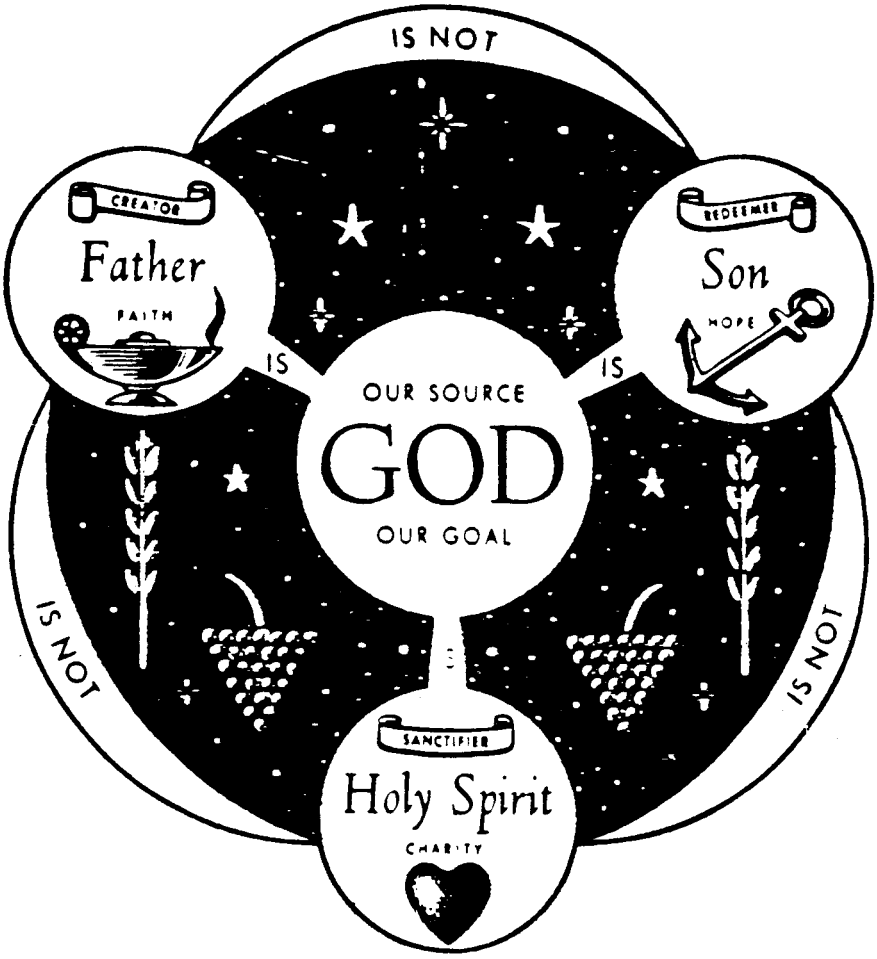
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

44. This the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe faithfully (truly and firmly), he cannot be saved.[14]

Interesting, to say the least, yet these creeds grossly distort the truth of the Godhead. It is strange indeed that so many embrace some or all of these statements as being biblical. The following diagrams developed from the teaching of the trinity. The first[15] is less elaborate than the second[16]; both are equally unbiblical.




*A Diagram of the Trinity*

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**NOTES:**

Both before and after the Council of Nicaea, numerous concepts developed concerning the Godhead. While the trinitarian doctrine was espoused by some, other doctrines about God were also taught. We present only six of them due to space, but they give insight on the diversity of ideas that existed about God at that time.

1. **Marcionites**—Marcion, son of a bishop of Pontus, went to Rome about A.D. 140 and taught that there are two Gods: the God of the Old Testament, who was a God of hate, and the God of the New Testament (the Father), revealed in Jesus as a God of love.[17] The Marcionites sometimes practiced vicarious baptisms for the dead.[18]

2. **Docetism**—"The gist of this view was that Christ only appeared to have a body and hence that he only appeared to be human."[19]

3. **Adoptionism**—This doctrine asserted that Christ is not truly the begotten Son of God, but rather a man adopted by God. This act of adoption supposedly took place at Jesus' baptism.[20]

4. **Apollinarianism**—Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea in Syria, died in A.D. 390. He taught that Christ is both human and divine, but that the Word (Greek, *logos*), or deity, took the place of the human soul or mind.[21] Thus the humanity of Christ was incomplete.

5. **Monophysitism**—Eutyches, a monk, was a prominent advocate of this teaching, which is also called Eutychianism.[22] He taught that there is only one nature in Christ; although His humanity was real, it is absorbed by His divinity.[23]

6. **Nestorianism**—Nestorius, A.D. 428, emphasized the distinction between humanity and deity in Christ. His opponents alleged that, according to his doctrine, there are two distinct persons in Christ, one divine and one human.[24]

History is filled with teachings like these. Rising above these concepts, the doctrine of the trinity gained acceptance through the strength and support of the Roman Catholic Church, which not only controlled religious affairs but political affairs as well.

Not everyone accepted the teaching of the trinity, even during extreme persecutions and privations. Reviled through history as heretics, multitudes contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. Prior to the Dark Ages, as the doctrine of the trinity was evolving, many people declared their belief in the oneness of God and the deity of Jesus Christ.

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## EARLY CHURCH WRITERS

Jesus and His apostles taught that He was God manifested in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16; John 10:30). After the death of the apostles, the post-apostolic writers affirmed this

**NOTES:**

truth. Later, many people descended into error, as we have examined, yet not all departed from the faith as some clung tenaciously to the truths of the Bible.

Historians use the term modalistic monarchians, or modalists, to identify people in the third century who affirmed the oneness of God and the deity of Jesus Christ in opposition to the emerging doctrine of the trinity. The word *mode* simply means that they believed the one God had manifested Himself in three ways but was not three persons. Briefly, here are the beliefs of some prominent teachers in the early centuries.

1. **Ignatius of Antioch**—Ignatius was the bishop of Antioch in A.D. 107 and was ultimately martyred for the faith. He strongly emphasized the deity of Jesus Christ, calling Him "our God." He said, "Be deaf, therefore, when any would speak to you apart from [at variance with] Jesus Christ."[25]

2. **Irenaeus**—Polycarp, a reputed student of the apostle John, was a teacher whom Irenaeus heard. As bishop of the church in Lyons, France, in A.D. 180, Irenaeus declared, "The church, though scattered through the whole world to the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and their disciples the faith in one God, the Father Almighty."[26]

3. **Tertullian**—lived around A.D. 200. He originally was a lawyer; then he became a presbyter in North Africa. He was a strong supporter of the Catholic church but later turned to Montanism, a breakaway group, around A.D. 212-13. In earlier years he said, "The rule of faith is altogether one; sole, immovable, and irreformable, namely to believe in one God Almighty."[27]

   Although Tertullian stated he believed in one God, in his exploration of God's manifestations he fostered the idea of a trinity, being the first teacher to speak of "one God in three persons." Many credit him as the father of trinitarianism. However, it may be that Theophilus first introduced the idea of threeness in God's nature, and it seems that that Origen, in the third century, was more responsible for promoting the idea of a trinity in the mainstream of Christianity.

4. **Praxeas**—Tertullian wrote *Against Praxeas* c. A.D. 190. It is an attack against Praxeas's teaching on the Godhead. Tertullian stated, "He [Praxeas] thought the catholic doctrine tritheistic."[28] Praxeas rejected Tertullian's belief in three persons and held that Jesus Christ was the manifestation of the fullness of God.

5. **Noetus**—was from Smyrna (A.D. 200) and apparently held the same view as Praxeas, declaring that Christ is "the one God over all."[29] Two of his disciples, Epigonus and Cleomenes, propagated this doctrine with the favor of Zephyrinus, who was bishop of Rome in A.D. 202-17.[30] (The bishop of Rome would later be known as the pope.)

6. **Callistus**—was the bishop of Rome in A.D. 218-23, and he adopted and advocated the doctrine of Noetus.[31]

**NOTES:**

Zephyrinus and Callistus, both bishops, believed in the oneness of God. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church disdains both, though it recognizes them as popes.

7. **Beryllus**—was from Bostra, Arabia, born in A.D. 244. "He denied the personal preexistence and in general the independent divinity of Christ, but at the same time asserted the indwelling of the divinity of the Father in him during his earthly life."[32]

8. **Sabellius**—was a presbyter in North Africa. At an old age, he was excommunicated in A.D. 260-61. He was a staunch believer in the oneness of God, and he "was first gained by Callistus to Patripassianism."[33] Patripassianism is a term that trinitarians often used derogatorily of modalists. The term means "the Father suffered"; trinitarians said that if the Father was manifested in Christ, as the modalists taught, then the Father suffered when Christ was crucified.[34] They considered it foolish to think that the Father, as the supreme God, could suffer in any way.

Because of the similarity of these ancient teachings to the basic Oneness position today, sometimes trinitarians call the Oneness message a revival of Sabellianism, Patripassianism, or modalistic monarchianism (modalism). As trinitarianism became entrenched, believers in the oneness of God and absolute deity of Jesus Christ were rejected as heretics and persecuted. Many suffered and died for this truth at the hands of the Roman Catholic church. Freedom of religion vanished as Catholicism became the religion of the state.

Along with the doctrine of the trinity, the Roman Catholic Church helped give birth to such teachings as monasticism, purgatory, transubstantiation, papal infallibility, veneration of saints, worship of Mary, and the immaculate conception of Mary. Because of the complete control of the Catholic church, all who would not accept such teachings were severely persecuted. Believers such as the Albigenses, Waldenses, Lollards, and others suffered widespread persecution because of their beliefs. Finally, the Roman Catholic Church encountered a rebellion against unbiblical practices that could not be crushed.

## THE REFORMATION

In this dark religious climate, several events prepared the way for change, including the invention of the printing press and the translation of the Bible into the language of the people. Men such as William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English, died at the hands of the Catholic Church for their labors.

Martin Luther, born on November 10, 1483, fanned the flames that resulted in the Reformation, which eventually brought religious freedom to Europe. "It was Luther's reading of the New Testament which convinced him that the church in his day was not true to the intentions of its founder and had lost all sense of its true mission."[35] On October 31, 1517, Luther revealed his ninety-five theses, or theological statements,

**NOTES:**

either by sending them to bishops or nailing them to the door of the church in Wittenburg. As a result of this and other writings, he was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church on January 3, 1521. A formal protest from Luther's delegation to an imperial assembly in 1529 caused them to be termed *protesters* or *Protestants*.

As Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, and others surged forward in their reforming efforts, one sad note remains: they retained many of the teachings of the Catholic church. As unbiblical as the Athanasian Creed is, Luther said of it, "The Athanasian Creed is the most important and glorious composition since the days of the Apostles."[36]

The Reformers held tenaciously to many doctrines of the Catholic church, such as the trinity, baptism by sprinkling in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and infant baptism. After a time, as the Scriptures became available to the common people, many began practicing baptism by immersion and baptism of believers (instead of infants). The baptism of believers gave this movement the name *Anabaptists* meaning those who "rebaptized."

Soon many Protestant groups came into existence, including the Mennonites, Baptists, Presbyterians, and other evangelical groups. Though some people did begin to baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, most clung steadfastly to the baptismal formula devised by the Catholic church, namely, baptism in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. An investigation of the Scriptures, however, reveals that no one in the New Testament was baptized having the words "I now baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" called over them. All New Testament converts were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2, 8, 10, 19). "At first, baptisms took place in the name of the Lord Jesus, later in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[37] As the following quote from a Catholic historian demonstrates, most Protestant churches retained much of the doctrine of the Catholic church from which they broke away:

> The contemporary quest for Christian reunion can only succeed by "redoing" the Reformation, and by recognizing the exaggerations and one-sidedness of both Catholics and Protestants during the sixteenth century. The Reformers took with them, when they left the Catholic Church, many teachings and practices which were genuinely Christian and Catholic, but which become suspect in post-Tridentine Catholicism precisely because the Reformers emphasized them. During the same period, the Catholic Church kept a number of teachings and practices which had come down to it from Christian antiquity, but which have become suspect in post-Reformation Protestantism precisely because Catholics emphasized them. Today, to the extent that both groups can affirm their common patrimony, they will find that whatever one may say of the differences which may divide them, they are probably not great enough to justify the existence of separate and mutually exclusive churches.[38]

Prior to the Reformation, during the Reformation, and in this century, history bears record to a vibrant host of believers in the oneness of God in Jesus Christ.[39] Not all have retained the doctrine of the trinity and the trinitarian formula for baptism, promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church.

**NOTES:**

As religious freedom increased, the Bible became available, America was settled, and the populace became widely educated, great religious awakenings or revivals became the order of the day. The twentieth century saw a great return to the apostolic teachings of water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and receiving the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking with tongues. This revival spread across America and around the world. In view of what the Bible teaches, why should we not search out these truths for ourselves and then experience them? All of it is for us. Joy unspeakable will be our reward for obeying God's Word!

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## ENDNOTES

[1]J. Glentworth Butler, *Butler's Biblework* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1889) 1:128-29.

[2]Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, repr. 1983) 2:100-1; hereafter referred to as *Fathers*.

[3]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1910) 2:569.

[4]*Fathers* 2:101. This is from a footnote to Theophilus, *To Autolycus*.

[5]Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, repr. 1985) 2:24-35.

[6]Clarence E. Elwell et al., *Our Quest for Happiness, The Ark and the Dove* (Chicago: Mentzer, Bush, and Co., 1957) 3:269.

[7]Schaff, *History* 3:645.

[8]Ibid., 640.

[9]Schaff, *Creeds* 1:19.

[10]Elwell et al., 271

[11]Schaff, *Creeds* 1:35.

[12]Ibid., 456.

[13]Ibid., 456. A slightly different version appears at 58-59.

[14]Ibid., 66-70.

[15]Rosalind Rinker, *Prayer, Conversing with God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 112.

[16]Elwell et al., inside cover.

[17]John C. Dwyer, *Church History: Twenty Centuries of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 74.

[18]Schaff, *History* 2:487.

[19]Boniface Ramsey, *Beginning to Read the Fathers* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 74.

[20]Ibid.

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[21]Schaff, *History* 3:709-14; Ramsey, 74.

[22]Elwell et al., 275-76.

[23]Ramsey, 75; Schaff, *History* 3:762-67.

[24]Elwell et al., 275; Ramsey, 75; Schaff, *History* 3:715-33.

[25]Schaff, *Creeds* 2:11.

[26]Ibid., 13-16.

[27]Ibid., 16-20.

[28]Schaff, *History* 2:577.

[29]Ibid., 578.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., 578-79.

[32]Ibid., 579-80.

[33]Ibid., 581.

[34]Ramsey, 43.

[35]Dwyer, 226.

[36]Schaff, *Creeds* 1:41.

[37]Robert M. Grant, *Gods and the One God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 53.

[38]Dwyer, 282.

[39]Thomas Weisser, *After the Way Called Heresy* (Monmouth, OR: By the author, 1981).

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**LESSON 23**

**NOTES:**

# THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD

## I PETER 4:7-10

God's grace is one of the most important and interesting subjects in the entire Bible. The Scriptures teach so much on this vital matter that it would take volumes to cover it adequately. The purpose of this study is to examine one phrase that the apostle Peter used on the subject.

We will give seven points, with only brief notes on each, due to lack of space. The reader is encouraged to develop more extensive notes on each point through personal study and investigation of God's Word.

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## DEFINITIONS

According to I Peter 4:10, we are "stewards of the manifold grace of God." What a responsibility is embodied in this statement! It is important for each of us to define this role and understand the value of our entrusted commodity.

- **Steward**—comes from the Greek word *oikonomos,* meaning a manager or an overseer.

- **Manifold**—comes from the Greek word *poikilos,* meaning motley, of many colors, variegated, various in character, diverse. Marvin R. Vincent in his *Word Studies in the New Testament* said, "Manifold in its Greek form is used to describe the skin of a leopard, different veinings in marble, an embroidered robe, the changing months and the variations of a strain of music."

- **Grace**—According to *Webster's New World Dictionary* grace means the unmerited love and favor of God toward humans to make them pure and morally strong. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* says the Hebrew word for grace, *chanan,* means to stoop in kindness to an inferior, favor, bestow, show favor, have mercy, and pity upon. It also says the Greek word for grace, *charis,* means graciousness of manner or act, the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; acceptable, benefit, favor, and gift.

Embodied in grace are all the wonderful attributes of God, such as mercy, love, kindness, patience, and longsuffering. Let us examine the following instances.

**NOTES:**

## MANIFOLD GRACE

God's grace touches every area of our lives, and we need to appropriate it to ourselves in every measure, applying it to our lives, in order to please God. Paul, cognizant of God's grace in his life, wrote forcefully on this beautiful truth. He spoke of (1) the riches of His grace (II Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 1:7), (2) the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24), and (3) the dispensation of the grace of God (Romans 6:14-15; Ephesians 3:2).

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). Jesus Christ has given us grace so that we may obtain more grace. What more could we ask of God? He gives us grace to receive more of the same in order that we might be saved initially and eternally. And we are stewards of this grace! What an awesome responsibility, but what an honor!

1. **Saving Grace**—God has granted us favor and mercy so that we can be born again of the water and Spirit, granting us entrance into the kingdom of God (John 3:1-8). This is accomplished in our lives when we believe and obey Acts 2:38.

   Only through the grace of God can we be saved from our sins. Foremost in our lives is the need of salvation from sin. God has provided grace for this and other needs, for which we should be eternally grateful.

   "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

   "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

   After we are saved by the grace of God, we need to keep several factors in mind:

   a. It is possible fail of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:3, 12-16).

   b. We are to grow in grace (II Peter 3:18).

   c. We are to be strong in grace (II Timothy 2:1).

   d. We are to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:43).

   e. We can receive grace through humility (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; I Peter 5:5).

   f. Whatever we become or achieve in God, it will be by His grace (I Corinthians 15:10).

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g. Our speech is to be with grace, seasoned (spiced or prepared) with salt (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:5-6).

The prophets spoke of the grace that we know today, and we will receive additional grace at the return of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:8-13).

2. **Teaching Grace**—Grace in all these instances is the same; it is only applied and used in different or manifold senses. The same grace that brought us salvation will teach us the following things (Titus 2:11-15; Hebrews 12:28; 13:9):

   a. We are to deny ungodliness.

   b. We are to deny worldly lusts.

   c. We are to live soberly.

   d. We are to live righteously.

   e. We are to live godly.

   By God's grace we are to accomplish these things in this present world, not at some future date. While achieving these things, we are to look for the coming of the Lord (Titus 2:13).

3. **Abounding Grace**—God gave the law that the offense of sin might abound—that we understand and recognize the sinfulness of sin. Even with the revelation of the grossness and abundance of sin, God's grace abounded above all sin. Sin in its greatest form and excessiveness can never abound above the grace of God in the life of the saint, as long as he or she lives in accordance with God's Word. (See Romans 5:19-21; II Corinthians 4:15; I Timothy 1:12-15.)

4. **Hope through Grace**—Hope is a great study within itself, so let us delve into the depths of it, realizing that our hope comes through and by the grace of God. Without God's grace we would have no hope for this life or the life to come. The believer originally acquires hope through the grace of God (II Thessalonians 2:16). Through hope, we then receive things and are motivated to do things that we could not accomplish through any other means (Romans 5:1-5; 8:24-25; I John 3:1-3).

5. **Justification by Grace**—When God justifies us, He counts us as just or innocent in His sight. Only through His unmerited favor could we obtain such a glorious state.

   a. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his

**NOTES:**

righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:23-25).

b. "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

c. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

d. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:9).

6. **Sufficient Grace**—The abundance of revelations put the apostle Paul in a precarious position spiritually. To keep him humble and away from personal exaltation, which would have been destructive, God allowed him to have a thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:1-10). After he asked God three times to remove this thorn, it was not removed, but God provided grace sufficient for him to live with it.

   Immediate deliverance does not always come to saints in distress, problems, and afflictions, but God always makes available a sufficient portion of His grace to carry us through them.

7. **Grace to Help**—There is a "throne of grace" that we may approach boldly at any time. There we obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need (Hebrews 4:16). Often in our Christian experience, we will find ourselves going to this throne. Life is filled with many problems, failures, and needs that drive us to a source of help. Times of need are many, but through God there is grace for these times (I Corinthians 15:10; James 4:4-6).

Studying one part, color, hue, work, or strain of the grace of God does not present this glorious truth in its entirety. God's grace is manifold; many parts compose the sum of this great attribute of God that is available to humans. All seven aspects of the grace of God that we have discussed, along with many others, are available to us on a daily basis.

May we ever sing with grateful hearts, through tear-stained eyes, the beautiful, scriptural hymn:

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

**LESSON 24**

**NOTES:**

# EVIL COMMUNICATIONS CORRUPT GOOD MANNERS

## I CORINTHIANS 15:32-34

I Corinthians 15 deals extensively with the interesting subject of the resurrection. Along with this vital subject, many other pertinent truths are revealed within the confines of this chapter. Nestled in verse 33 is our subject at hand: "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

At first glance this verse seems misplaced in relation to the resurrection. Upon closer examination, we see that it is a vital link in our preparation for the first resurrection. Though all will be resurrected, not all will come forth to the resurrection of life. Some will come forth to the resurrection of damnation (John 5:29). Let us consider carefully the correlation of our subject to being prepared for the first resurrection.

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## DEFINITIONS

- **Communications**—In the context, this word does not refer to speech, but it means a group of companions, company, crowd, or gang.

- **Manners**—In the context, this word does not refer to etiquette, but it means custom, morals, or character.

Preceding the statement is a strong warning: "Be not deceived." This passage leaps out at us, telling us that we need to be on guard and alert, for a danger lurks nearby. (See Luke 21:8; I Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 6:7; Ephesians 5:6.) In short, we must not be tricked into allowing evil associates to corrupt and destroy our Christian character.

Tremendous influences exert themselves in our environment. As an analogy, many animals tend to take on the color and hue of their habitat. It is often said that after years of marriage, couples begin to look like each other. It is clear that we are influenced by what goes on around us.

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## OUR NAME AND REPUTATION

These are valuable assets developed through years of effort and discipline. We must exercise utmost caution as we guard them diligently.

**NOTES:**

- **A Good Name—**"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1). "A good name is better than precious ointment" (Ecclesiastes 7:1).

- **A Reputation**—"Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour" (Ecclesiastes 10:1).

We must always remember that, day by day, brick by brick, and little by little, we are building a name and a reputation in the following areas.

1. **The Church**—Among our peers in the church, whether it be ministry or laity, we are building ourselves a name.

2. **The World**—We are also known outside the church. Does our reputation in the world match our professed Christianity?

Everyone is susceptible to corruption. Both inside and outside influences can corrupt good manners. We must take steps to preserve our position with God and humanity. Not only is it important to build a good name, it is also essential to maintain that good name.

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## FIVE BASIC AREAS OF INFLUENCE

Many things influence our lives. The following five topics cover the spectrum of agencies that mold our lives and help to determine our destinies.

- **What We See**—This category is not primarily what society causes us to see, but what we purposefully view. A familiar saying expresses the great influence of what we see: "A picture is worth a thousand words."

- **What We Hear**—Again, this category is not primarily society's din and shouting of obscenities, but what we purposefully seek out, relish, enjoy, dwell upon, and repeat.

- **What We Think**—Here were do not refer to the passing, foolish thoughts that Satan or our environment injects into our minds, but what we dwell upon, revel in, and determine to carry out after planned thinking.

- **What We Read**—Due to its influence upon the character, we must regulate our planned, purposeful ingestion of printed matter, over which we have absolute control.

- **What Company We Keep**—This phrase does not describe the casual acquaintance from school, job, or society, but mentors, idols, friends, buddies, and intimate circle of associates. They become a measure of what we, too, are. Here is the focal point of our subject.

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## OUR ASSOCIATES

One of the most influential forces in our lives is the company we keep—not passing acquaintances, but those with whom our spirit and personality become comfortable and whose presence and company we enjoy.

To a great extent, this group of communicants will dictate to us verbally and nonverbally what we do with the other four basic areas of influence in our lives. The very habits of our lives are affected and oftentimes altered by our associates.

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20). A once wise, wealthy, well-known man who knew the sharp truth of the latter part of this verse gave us this warning. The following examples stress this truth:

1. **Lot's Family in Sodom**—The final outcome of the influences of Sodom on Lot's family was devastating (Genesis 13-19).

2. **Samson**—Delilah and Samson's love for her led to his fall and death (Judges 13-16).

3. **Amnon**—"But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab" (II Samuel 13:1-3). Jonadab exerted a strong negative influence upon Amnon's life.

4. **Solomon**—"Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin" (Nehemiah 13:26). What a sad epitaph for such a great man!

5. **Judas Iscariot**—His betrayal of Jesus could have been averted through many means, one of which would have been cutting off his association with Jesus' enemies (Luke 22:1-6).

We like sheep go astray. So often we tend to sin. Our nature is corrupt. We are so easily influenced. Will we join the parade of casualties to become another statistic of failure, simply because we choose the wrong company?

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## SEPARATION

Separation is a Bible doctrine, although scorned by people outside the church and even some inside it as restriction, bondage, and legalism. Quarantine is an age-old method for stopping the spread of communicable diseases. Self-imposed quarantines against spiritually destructive devices must be a part of our lives.

Face it! There are some things we are going to have to deny ourselves. There are some places we cannot go, some things we cannot do, and some people with whom

**NOTES:**

we cannot associate. If we do not develop strength of character to eliminate some things from our lives, they will destroy us. Israel did not purify the Canaanites; the Canaanites corrupted Israel.

Everyone believes in separation to some degree. The problem is that we tend to shun only the worst influences, while allowing others to affect us. Some things and some people are best left alone. Many activities are not evil in themselves, but we must shun the ungodly crowd, with its corruptive influences, that accompanies the activities. (See Acts 4:23; I Corinthians 6:14-7:1; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; James 4:4.)

Somewhere and sometime, with God's help, we must decide and define for ourselves who and what we want to be, that is, what crowd we will be numbered with, what reputation we will bear, and what name we will carry. More than time and life are at stake here; these things will shape our eternal destiny.

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## LIFE'S VITAL AREAS

Five vital areas of our lives affect our "manners," or character, and determine what and who we are. Where we have the power of choice we must be extremely cautious and selective. We must give priority to the right choices in the light of the resurrection.

- **Parents**—Our parents give us the elementary and fundamental principles of life. Here we have no choice, but children do have an obligation to obey parents in the Lord. The Book of Proverbs gives much good instruction for parents and children. Parents are responsible to restrict their children's associates.

- **Dating**—No matter how innocent the relationship may be, dating is a prelude to marriage. Whom people date may well determine their spiritual well-being as well as future happiness. Christians should date only those who have proven themselves to be faithful Christians. They should date only those who are spiritual, not those who just profess it. Parents exercise a guiding hand here, but young people, too, must be discriminatingly selective regarding whom they date.

- **Marriage**—In marriage, we make lifelong vows of commitment to one other person, to moral purity, and to God. The person we marry has an immeasurable effect on our spiritual manners. Our companion can make or break us physically, spiritually, and financially by his or her conduct. A couple should commit themselves to enhancing each other in every aspect of life. Poor marriage partners destroyed Herod, Solomon, Ahab, and Haman. Be it far from us as Christians to do less than our best for our companions!

- **Social Life**—Every person, no matter how introverted he or she may be, has a certain degree of contact with society. We can become an influence for good upon our job associates, friends, neighbors, and family. Christians are the salt

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of the earth. We must not let our social contacts influence us for evil; rather, we should influence them for good. Of necessity, we must limit our relationship with those who revel in sin, lest they lead us astray. We should be friendly, love, smile, reach out, and show concern, but be careful not to yoke ourselves with unbelievers (I Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

- **Church Life**—Around every church there are two basic crowds: the larger one consists of spiritual, dedicated, holy Christians; the other consists of hypocrites, backsliders, the lukewarm, and some nonprofessing sinners. We have to make the choice of which group we wish to emulate and be part of.

You are on your honor here; no one can set your values for you in this area. You have full liberty to choose. Gossips, talebearers, and unruly individuals make churches their haunts. If you are weak and seek the low level of life, someone will furnish you a model. If you are strong, your sights high, and your ideals great, you will be able to walk among the greats of time and eternity, for they are found in the church. Scaling a spiritual Everest will be your challenge as you ascend where they are, for they are like Nehemiah on the wall and will never come down where you are; you must go to them (Nehemiah 6:3).

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From adolescence through adulthood, each person constantly faces the decision of *communications* and *manners*. Only you, within the inner sanctum of your heart, can make the daily choices of what and who you will be.

I will not delude you. There is a price to pay. Selectivity is hard. Principle and ethics are high priced. Character and reputation are hard-won wars. I challenge you to accept responsibility and get involved in your church's programs, services, and ministries. Be dependable, true, faithful, and loyal, and remember, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33).

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**LESSON 25**

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# CONTENTMENT

## I TIMOTHY 6:5-21

Our world and the generation in which we live are ravaged by the tragic malady of discontent. Discontent is not a disease, nor is it predicated upon circumstances or environment. Its tenacious grip is not regulated by lack of or excess of possessions, power, popularity, health, or any other commodity. Discontent is a spiritual maladjustment of the mind and spirit. It is a mighty tool of the enemy to incite divorce, rebellion, worldliness, excessive debt, spending, and taken to an extreme, suicide.

True life and happiness are not found in possessions. America's present generation would know no parallel in history for life and happiness if that were true. Obviously the opposite condition exists. While living in a splendid state of plenty, our world loathes itself and agonizes in the throes of discontent. Jesus warned us that life does not consist in the abundance of things we possess (Luke 12:15). Our world has not believed Him; we have tried our way and arrived at a dead-end street named Discontent.

One of the hallmarks and identities of a Christian should be a state of contentment. Contentment does not negate industry, achievement, and success. It simply brings the tranquility that Jesus intended into homes, hearts, and lives.

Reflection, internal investigation, and a reevaluation of our sense of values will assist us in our pursuit of this seemingly elusive commodity. We must implement God's plan and pattern in our lives if we are to be successful in our quest. We must expect and accept the cost factors such as self-denial, discipline, and thought adjustment.

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## AN OVERVIEW OF LIFE

This section is somewhat of a humbling view of ourselves, but it is an exact duplicate of what God shows us in His Word. Even if we had no Bible, we would know this to be true from experience. This story has been, and will be, repeated in the life of every human. With these facts in hand, we must decide the course we will pursue.

- **Into This World**

This point is the time of *birth*. We make our entry into life with *nothing* and *naked*. (See I Timothy 6:7; Job 1:21; Psalm 49:1-20; Ecclesiastes 5:12-15.)

Now the challenge is to acquire, accumulate, get, gain, receive, grow, and prosper.

We must beware lest we forget our circumstance when we entered the world.

**NOTES:**

- **In This World**

This represents our *lifetime*. How long or short it will be, we do not know. It is in this span that we will face greed, love of money, covetousness, and materialism. Here we will be content or discontented. We will use what we have to lay up treasure on earth or in heaven. Here we will prepare to meet God or else neglect to do so. Either we will serve Christ or reject Him. The choices we make and the life we live will determine our rewards and where we spend eternity when we take the next step.

- **Out of This World**

This represents *death* and eternity. We make our exit in a very surprising way, just as we came—with nothing. Now the worthwhile things are what we did for God. How we used our life while in the world, how we invested our possessions, will now pay off. Forever eternity looms before us; we will enjoy the blessings of a well-spent life or else suffer in hell for a misspent life. This portion of our life should regulate the life we now live.

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## GOD'S FORMULA FOR TRUE RICHES

The Scriptures teach that true and lasting riches are more than money. When we achieve godliness with contentment, we truly have great gain. Contentment raises a barrier to ward off discontent. (See I Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5.)

**GODLINESS[A] + CONTENTMENT[B] = GREAT GAIN[C]**

A. Godliness in this context means holiness, piety, devoutness, and reverence for God. Gain—money and wealth—is *not* godliness as some suppose (I Timothy 6:5).

B. Contentment in this context means satisfaction, happy enough with what one has, and not desiring something more or different. I Timothy 6:8 says that food plus clothing equals contentment.

C. Gain in this context means furnishing, procurement, acquisition, increase.

Contentment is a tremendous weapon to ward off lust, greed, divorce, selfishness, covetousness, and worldliness. Oh, what spiritual protection contentment provides for us! It is a veritable wall of protection against encroaching enticements that would lead us astray. Even in our affluent society, we should not take God's Word lightly. Saints should beware lest the foul spirit of discontent invades their lives, separating them from God.

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## WARNINGS TO THOSE WHO HAVE AND TO THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE

I Timothy 6 speaks of those who do not have many possessions yet have a strong desire for worldly attainments. These are the overly ambitious poor who have lost their moorings and are adrift on the sea of discontent. Solemnly the Scripture warns them of the tragic results of such driving desire, ambition, and expended energy.

The root cause of all these problems is the love of money, which in turn produces covetousness (I Timothy 6:10). As children of God, we are to flee from these things and to pursue the following: (1) righteousness, (2) godliness, (3) faith, (4) love, (5) patience, and (6) meekness (I Timothy 6:11). These are the building blocks to a scripturally sound life of contentment. This passage of Scripture gives warnings to those who want to be rich.

- **Those Who Want to Be Rich:**

  1. Fall into temptation.
  2. Fall into a snare.
  3. Fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which:
     a. Drown people in destruction and perdition.
     b. Cause them to err from the faith.
     c. Pierce them through with many sorrows.

I Timothy then focuses on those who already have riches, holdings, and possessions. Danger zones exist for them just as they do for the poor—in fact, more in some cases. Whether by inheritance or God's blessings upon their efforts, this group is greatly blessed with money and riches. Though it is not a sin to be rich, the Scripture warns Christians about the dangers of being rich (I Timothy 6:17).

- **Those Who Are Rich:**

  1. Are not to be high-minded.
  2. Are not to trust in uncertain riches.
  3. Are to do good.
  4. Are to be rich in good works.
  5. Are to be ready to distribute.
  6. Are to be willing to communicate (share with others).
  7. Are to lay in store a good foundation against the time to come.

What sound advice to both groups! We either have money, or we do not. In either case, dangers exist, and the Bible warns us of them.

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## ATTITUDES TOWARD MONEY

Ministers and saints alike should carefully scrutinize their lives and keep the proper attitude toward money and possessions.

- **Riches**—Solomon likened riches to a strange bird. It is without feathers and wings, yet suddenly it can fly away (Proverbs 23:5). Have you ever witnessed this truth in another's life? Are you and I exempt from the same?

- **Covetousness**—is a serious sin of the spirit, mind, and disposition, with grievous consequences if we allow it to control us.

  1. Take heed and beware of covetousness (Luke 12:15).

  2. Covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

  3. One of the Ten Commandments warns us against covetousness (Exodus 20:17).

  4. Things highly esteemed of people are an abomination to God (Luke 16:15).

- **Thorns**—Jesus enumerated four kinds of thorns that can grow up in our lives and choke the spiritual life from us (Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14).

  1. Deceitfulness of riches.

  2. Cares of this world.

  3. Lusts of other things.

  4. Pleasures of this life.

Clearly, we need to seek a balanced life regarding possessions, ever being cognizant that if we gain the world and lose our soul we are all the poorer (Proverbs 30:8-9; Matthew 16:26). This truth is evident in the accounts of the following people:

1. **Achan**—(Joshua 7:21).

2. **Rich Young Ruler**—(Matthew 19:16-26).

3. **Gehazi**—(II Kings 5:20-27).

4. **Two Rich Men**—(Luke 12:13-21; 16:13-31).

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## DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Every child of God should settle in his or her heart that God will supply all his or her needs. God used ravens to bring food to Elijah, sustained the widow of Zarephath, fed Israel with manna, fed five thousand on one occasion, and fed four thousand on another. He sees the falling sparrow and supplies beauty to the nonlaboring lily, so surely He watches over us.

If we will claim His promises and seek first the kingdom of God, He will supply all the other needs of life (Matthew 6:19-34; Luke 12:22-40). In a storm-tossed world forever seeking it knows not what, we can anchor our lives in Christ Jesus with the anchor of contentment. Though it may seem elusive, there is within us the ability to obtain and maintain contentment. Let us resist the subtle spirit of procuring things for the sake of things. When we cease from our struggles, turn our lives over to God, set our affections on things above, and let Him bring peace like a river to our souls, we can rest upon His promise: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

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**LESSON 26**

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# GOD'S METHOD OF PROVING HIS PEOPLE

## DEUTERONOMY 8:1-6

Although we are God's chosen people, who serve and love Him, God will nevertheless prove our devotion. Our profession of faith and testimony do not completely validate our sincerity before God. These are well and good, yet God will often subject us to severe testing and trials to prove our dedication to Him. Lip service and noble thoughts are not the criteria by which God grants rewards and approval. Rather, divine approval comes to the proven saint who stands every test and who excels in faithfulness during times of trial.

Almost every product sold on the market today has to meet certain requirements before it is sold to the public. Automobile manufacturers put their cars through hundreds of tests on various testing grounds, testing parts and performance before they put them on the market for sale. Underwriters' laboratories place their seal of approval on products they test, but only after they meet certain requirements. The purpose of any type of testing, whether of material things or people, is to determine performance, durability, limitations, and usefulness. Those who fail under testing receive no seal of approval.

Christians are not exempt from discipline. Many things that arise in our lives will prove our abilities, sincerity, and consecration. Bragging and boasting die on the proving ground. Shakable things are removed in order for the unshakable to remain (Hebrews 12:27). Testing removes the insincere, hypocrite, lazy, and weak from the ranks. We are in a race (I Corinthians 9:24; Hebrews 12:1), and we are soldiers in a battle (II Timothy 2:3-5), striving for a crown at the close of life. Only the proven will achieve it. Are you willing to dedicate fully to be approved of God?

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## DEFINITION

While studying the meaning of *prove*, we should keep in mind that God does not use trials to destroy us but to mature and edify us.

In both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, *prove* means to test, tempt, try, scrutinize, entice, discipline, and examine.

In the case of Israel, God wanted to know several things about them, as well as to develop some needed virtues in their lives. For forty years He led them through the wilderness to accomplish the following in each of them (Deuteronomy 8:1-6):

1. To humble them.
2. To prove them.
3. To know what was in their heart.

**NOTES:**

4. To know whether they would keep His commandments.
5. To make them know that humans do not live by bread alone.

Pressure reveals contents! Under duress and stress, what we really are surfaces. God wants the professing *and* possessing in His kingdom. He looks upon the heart to make the final determination—as when David was chosen to be king of Israel (I Samuel 16:7) and when Matthias was chosen to take Judas's place (Acts 1:24).

God uses the following things, along with others, to determine our devotion to Him. Again, He does not intend for any of these things to destroy us.

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## WE ARE PROVEN BY THE WORLD

Our environment is an important factor in our living for God. Sin exists all around us in every form and fashion. In such an environment God wants people who are saved by grace and taught by that same grace to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this *present world* (Titus 2:11-12). God wants us, and will enable us, to live in the midst of abounding sin and yet to retain a character that is unspotted and unblemished by this world (Ephesians 5:26-27; James 1:27).

1. **Israel**—God left some of the unbelieving, sinful inhabitants of Canaan in the land in order to check Israel's devotion to Him (Judges 2:20-23; 3:1-7). Though the remaining Canaanites were few in number, Israel allowed the Canaanites to defile and to corrupt them by picking up their sinful ways.

2. **Daniel**—Conditions in his life were as adverse as possible, yet he and his three friends purposed some things in their hearts and refused to let their world (Babylon) separate them from the one true God (Daniel 1:8-21).

3. **Solomon**—was one of history's greatest men, yet his demise lives on in our memory and in the Word of God. When put to the test, he allowed his wives to turn his heart from God (I Kings 11:1-4).

Between the Christian and the world there must always be a clear line of demarcation (I Corinthians 6:14-7:1). We are in the world. Jesus did not pray for us to be taken out of the world, but to be kept while in the world (John 15:18-19; 17:14-20). God's Word gives us the proper perspective we are to have toward the world: (1) We are not to love the three elements of the world, namely, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:15-17). (2) We are not to abuse this world while having to use it (I Corinthians 7:29-31). (3) We are not to be a friend to this world (James 4:4). (4) We are to be crucified to the world, and the world to us (Galatians 6:14).

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## WE ARE PROVEN BY TEMPTATION

The Scripture uses *temptation* in two different ways. It is absolutely essential to distinguish between them and to discern which is spoken of in a particular passage. Defining the source or type of temptation is important to our spiritual well-being.

- **Enticement to Evil**—Temptation of this type always comes from Satan using the lust in our Adamic nature (James 1:12-16). David fell while under this type of temptation (II Samuel 11:1-4). Joseph was proven through this type of temptation and passed the test (Genesis 39:1-23). God cannot be enticed with evil, nor does He entice people to do evil; we must always keep this cardinal truth in mind. When we are tempted to do evil, the temptation is not from God.

- **Testing for Approval**—God may (1) purposefully try or test us, or (2) He may allow Satan to test and try us for a specific purpose.

  1. **Abraham**—God tried Abraham when commanding him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to Him. Genesis 22:1 uses the word *tempt*, which is properly interpreted as *tried* in Hebrews 11:17.

  2. **Job**—God allowed Satan to test Job (Job 1-2). Though Job's test was not directly from God as Abraham's was, yet God allowed him to be tested.

Both of these types of temptation will be the lot of every saint of God. Our prayer should be that we would not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13). When we are facing the trial of our faith, which Peter said would come (I Peter 1:7), we should always keep this promise in mind: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

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## WE ARE PROVEN BY FALSE DOCTRINE

After we come to the knowledge of the truth, the winds of false doctrine will test our love for the truth. Our love for truth must take precedence over anything or anyone in this world. Anything that supersedes truth in our lives ultimately becomes our idol. Though we are commanded to love our families, yet our love for truth must take precedence even over them (Deuteronomy 13:1-11). Heresies will find their way among the righteous to prove us (I Corinthians 11:18-19; II John 7-11). God has given us safeguards through His Word, the ministry, and the Holy Ghost to protect us from falling into false doctrine (Ephesians 4:11-14; Hebrews 13:9).

Balaam (Numbers 22-24) and the man of God from Judah (I Kings 13:1-31) listened to the wrong advice and paid a tremendous price for it. May God grant us wisdom and grace to say no to every false doctrine that we may encounter.

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We will be tried by false doctrine, for it abounds on every side. Faithfulness to a church where we can hear sound Bible preaching and teaching and a good personal knowledge of the Bible are good safety measures against being deceived by false doctrine.

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## WE ARE PROVEN BY OUR WILLINGNESS TO DEDICATE

Somewhere in our Christian experience we will be put to the test in the area of dedication and consecration. When called upon for sacrifice, will we obey and follow? This test comes to every Christian; some pass, others fail. Which will it be for us? We must prove ourselves to God in our generation. Here are some examples:

1. **Rich Young Ruler**—He went away sorrowfully, with Jesus loving him all the while, simply because he failed the test of dedication (Luke 18:18-23).

2. **Peter**—After Peter caught a great catch of fish, the Lord tested the love of his life (fishing) by asking Peter if he loved Him more than anything else (John 21:15-19).

3. **Ministers**—The apostle Paul outlined the qualifications to be a minister. Each of them demands a consecration to the cause of God. God calls people, and then they must pay the price of dedication if they are to be suited to the work (I Timothy 3:1-13).

4. **Discipleship**—Self-denial and cross-bearing are prerequisites for discipleship (Matthew 16:24-26). God's lowest standard for discipleship is for us to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to Him (Romans 12:1-2).

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God chooses many means and methods to prove our love for Him, so we can be sure that tests will come our way. If there were no darkness, we would never know the true meaning of light. Truth shines brightest against the backdrop of heresy and false doctrine. True disciples of Christ radiate His glory best in the midst of a sinful, dark, and evil environment. Those who are His would never be known were it not for the tests that prove their spiritual fitness (Psalm 66:10). David wanted God to prove and examine him (Psalm 26:2). Self-examination and evaluation of our position in God are biblical requirements (II Corinthians 13:5).

God's Word is the only comparison chart we are to use, since measuring and comparing ourselves among ourselves is inadequate (II Corinthians 10:12-18). We must pass through God's proving ground and training field before we are rewarded. Our great eternal Judge will prove us through various trials before we come forth as gold (Job 23:10; James 1:2-3; I Peter 1:7).

Soon our proving days will be over, and then God will reward us for every inconvenience we have encountered. Again, God is not trying to destroy us through testing; He only wants to prove who and what we really are. Testing is only for a season, but the rewards are eternal. Whatever we are facing now, let us go to God for grace to help in our time of need; His grace is sufficient.

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**LESSON 27**

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# ANGELS

## HEBREWS 1:1-14

Although little is preached or taught on angels, since it is such an important Bible subject, extending from Genesis to Revelation, it is necessary to study about angels. Interesting and assuring truths unfold when we discover the role of angels in relation to our Christian walk. Biblical insight into the existence of angels and what is happening in the world of the unseen should allay skepticism and assure our hearts before God. Understanding something about angels and their work, both present and future, is an exciting study.

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## ORIGIN OF ANGELS

After we have developed a basic knowledge of the Scriptures and some insight into God's plan of the ages, the following is obvious:

1. Angels are created beings; they are not begotten (Hebrews 1:5, 13-14).

2. Apparently, God created the angels before the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1). The Bible calls angels morning stars and sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:4-7; Revelation 12:4). Scripture also calls believers the sons or children of God, but it is easy to distinguish which is meant (people or angels) when we consider the context.

3. God's Word clearly states that angels are spirits (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7, 14). They are messengers of God who obey His every command (Psalm 103:20-21). Under the direction of God, they have a wide range of capabilities. For example, they can temporarily take on a human form for a specific mission (Genesis 18:1-19; Hebrews 13:2). On one occasion, an angel stood before Balaam's donkey, and the donkey could see the angel, but Balaam could not (Numbers 22:22-35).

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## NATURE OF ANGELS

Angels have a nature of their own, which is much different from God's or ours. Scripture mentions one eternal being and two immortal beings. One is uncreated, without beginning or end; the other two were created but will have no end. They are:

- **God**—The one uncreated and eternally self-existent being.

**NOTES:**

- **Angels**—The higher order of immortal creatures.
- **Humans**—The lower order of immortal creatures.

We will understand the angels' nature better when we keep the following in mind:

1. Angels are spirits (Psalm 104:4).
2. Angels never die (Luke 20:35-36).
3. Angels do not marry (Mark 12:25).
4. Christ has a different nature from angels (Hebrews 2:16).
5. Angels are of a higher order than humans (Psalm 8:4-6; Hebrews 2:6-7).
6. Jesus Christ in His humanity was made lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:9). (See also Philippians 2:5-8.)
7. Angels are worshiping creatures; they worship Jesus Christ (Isaiah 6:1-3; Hebrews 1:6).

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## THE FALL OF ANGELS

As shocking as it may sound, it is yet true: a portion of the angels of God have fallen. Their fall was predicated upon the same thing that caused humanity to fall: sin or rebellion against God and His Word.

Apparently, all the angels that will fall have already fallen. In the rebellion of Lucifer, all the angels were put to the supreme test, with some failing. Since then, it appears that no more angels have fallen.

Most Bible scholars agree that Lucifer was an angel in the beginning who rebelled against God and became the devil. The angels who followed him are called devils or demons (Greek, *diamonion*) (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7). Here are some scriptural references to investigate:

1. Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-15).
2. The devil drew one-third of the stars, presumably angels (Revelation 12:1-4).
3. Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7).
4. *Devils* (demons) first appears in Leviticus 17:7 and is used extensively throughout the New Testament (Matthew 4:24; 8:28; 1 Corinthians 10:20-21; 1 Timothy 4:1).

**NOTES:**

When Jesus cast out demons, He was accused of doing so by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Matthew 10:25; 12:22-30). This name appears to be the same as Baalzebub in the Old Testament (II Kings 1:2). According to *Dake's Annotated Bible*, "Beelzebub was the Philistine God of Flies. The Jews changed it to Beelzebul, the dung God, or lord of the dunghill, a most contemptuous and vile idol" (NT, p. 10).

Jesus, as God, saw Satan (the devil) fall from heaven as lightning (Luke 10:17-20). In this passage, the demons are called spirits.

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## ORDERS OR RANKS OF ANGELS

The Word of God refers to various orders, classes, or ranks of angels. Each has its own respective work or place to fill. All angels are spirit beings, but God seems to use some in more specific ways than others. We do not exalt one group above another or minimize the role of any angel; all are important in the economy of God.

- **Seraph**—(plural, *seraphim*; the King James Version calls them "seraphims") means "burning ones" and are mentioned in only one place in the Bible (Isaiah 6:1-8). This passage describes the appearance of the seraphim in detail. Most commentators agree that these beings are a special order of angels, created for the role that Isaiah depicts, surrounding the throne of God.

- **Cherub**—(plural, *cherubim*; the King James Version calls them "cherubims") is spoken of extensively in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament (Hebrews 9:5). Here are references to this group of angels and their work and role in God's kingdom.

  1. At Eden (Genesis 3:24).

  2. Golden cherubim on the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:18-24).

  3. Representations woven on the veil of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1, 31) and placed in Solomon's Temple (II Chronicles 3:10-14).

  4. In Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1-10).

- **Archangel**—The Bible only mentions one archangel, or chief angel. His name is Michael (Jude 9). Our Lord will return "with the voice of the archangel" (I Thessalonians 4:16).

- **Ordinary Angels**—For the lack of a better term, we will call the remaining group the common, ordinary angels of God. This term is not used disparagingly, for they are important. These angels are the unnamed heavenly host of God who are just as necessary as other angels. The Bible often refers to them and their work. Their duties include the following:

**NOTES:**

1. They are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:13-14).

2. They are given charge over the believers to keep them and bear them up (Psalm 91:11-12).

3. They are ministering spirits who are like flames of fire (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7).

4. They encamp around and deliver those who fear the Lord (Psalm 34:7).

5. They are innumerable (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 5:11).

- **Fallen Angels**—The Bible mentions two categories for this group of angels:

1. **Those Bound**—These fallen angels did not keep their first estate and are bound in chains of darkness awaiting the Day of Judgment. Apparently they are now harmless to humans, unless their chains of darkness refer to a spiritual condition rather than to a literal one. It appears, however, that this group is literally bound in chains of darkness awaiting the Day of Judgment (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6-7).

2. **Those Loosed**—As we discussed earlier, these fallen angels are the demons who work under Lucifer. They are emissaries of the devil who fell with him and whom he sends forth to torment, oppress, and possess humans. God's power in us is greater than all the combined powers of the fallen angels; therefore, we do not have to fear Satan or his angels (Romans 8:38).

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## NAMES OF ANGELS

A countless host of unnamed angels constantly surrounds the people of God; they are possibly more important to us than the named ones. The Bible only names a few angels:

1. **Lucifer**—(Isaiah 14:12-14).

2. **Michael**—(Jude 9); he is the archangel.

3. **Gabriel**—(Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19-26) appears to be a messenger of God for special occasions and events. He referred to himself as one who stands in the presence of God (Luke 1:19).

4. **Abaddon or Apollyon**—(Revelation 9:1-11). *Abaddon* is a Hebrew word meaning a destroying angel; *Apollyon* is a Greek word meaning a destroyer. Essentially the two words have the same meaning and refer to the angel who reigns over the bottomless pit and the locusts who will torment people during the Tribulation.

**NOTES:**

Regardless of how important the names of these angels are, none has a name that excels the name of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:4).

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## WORK OF ANGELS

Angels have a wide range of capabilities and work. Here are some examples of their duties; further details can be added through additional study.

1. Angels never marry. The saints will be like the angels in this sense, when they are resurrected (Mark 12:25).

2. The Bible first mentions angels as guarding the way to the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24).

3. Angels stand in the presence of God to praise and obey Him (Isaiah 6:1-8; Luke 1:19-26).

4. Angels are ministering spirits sent to the heirs of salvation (Psalm 34:7; 91:11-12; 104:4; Hebrews 1:13-14).

5. Angels rejoice when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10).

6. Angels are guardians of children and no doubt adults, too (Matthew 18:10). When Peter was delivered from prison and stood knocking at the door, the believers thought it was his angel (Acts 12:15).

7. Angels bore Lazarus at his death to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22).

8. Angels observe saints in their daily walk (I Corinthians 4:9).

9. Angels announce certain notable births:

   a. Samson (Judges 13:3-21).

   b. John the Baptist (Luke 1:11).

   c. Jesus (Luke 1:30; 2:9).

10. Angels opened prisons (Acts 5:19; 12:7-12).

11. Angels directed preachers (Acts 8:26; 27:23).

12. Angels directed people to preachers (Acts 10:1-8).

13. Angels held a prominent place in the life of Christ:

**NOTES:**

a. Announced His name and birth (Matthew 1:20-21).

b. Worshiped Him (Hebrews 1:6).

c. Ministered to Him in His temptation (Matthew 4:11).

d. Strengthened Him in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).

e. Were available to help Him when He was taken in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:53).

f. Rolled away the stone from His tomb at His resurrection (Matthew 28:2-4).

g. Sat in His empty tomb and spoke with the disciples (John 20:11-12).

h. Will accompany Him at His revelation (II Thessalonians 1:7-8).

The Bible refers to angels 294 times. There are 32 appearances to specific people, and in some cases, they appeared more than once, for a total of 104 appearances. (See *Dake's Annotated Bible*, NT, p. 25.)

The work and ministry of angels are of incalculable value. As the days go by, we may not realize how they minister to us and in how many ways. Nevertheless, we should say, "Thank God for angels."

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## FUTURE OF ANGELS

All the angels whom God created will always exist because they are immortal beings. Punishment or reward for them seems to be determined solely on their allegiance to God or their rebelling with Lucifer. God's Word does give us some interesting insights into the future activity of angels.

1. Angels, along with the rest of the world, will be judged by the saints (I Corinthians 6:1-7; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Redeemed humans, who were created lower than the angels who serve God faithfully, will be deemed worthy to judge the angels who sinned. This judgment will probably occur at the time of the judgment of the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

2. Angels will not have the new heavens and earth under their subjection, for these belong to the people of God (Hebrews 2:5-8).

3. Angels will stand at the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, one at each gate (Revelation 21:12).

4. Angels will accompany the Lord at His revelation as He executes judgment on the world (Matthew 25:31; II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

**NOTES:**

5. Angels are the reapers who will gather the tares from among the wheat in the end (Matthew 13:24-39).

6. The Book of Revelation mentions angels extensively in the woes, trumpets, vials, and other facets of the Tribulation period (Revelation 7:1; 8:2; 15:6-8).

7. Angels will have war in heaven. Michael and his angels will fight against the dragon (devil) and his angels (Revelation 12:7-11). Satan will be cast down completely with no future access to God's presence as the accuser of the brethren. The final doom of Satan and his angels will be the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

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## FACTS ABOUT ANGELS

The Bible reveals other interesting facts about angels:

1. Manna is poetically described as angels' food (Psalm 78:25).

2. The Sadducees did not believe in angels (Acts 23:8).

3. Satan can transform himself as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14).

4. Angels do not know the time of Jesus' return (Mark 13:32).

5. God gave the law of Moses through the agency of angels (Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19).

6. Fallen angels (demons) cannot separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38).

7. There appears to be an angelic language (I Corinthians 13:1).

8. We are not to worship angels (Colossians 2:18).

9. Angels are innumerable (Hebrews 12:22).

10. A woman ought to have long hair on her head because of angels (I Corinthians 11:10).

11. We can entertain angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2).

12. Angels desire to look into our great salvation (I Peter 1:12).

Studying angels is so interesting. Even more exciting than studying them is knowing that they encamp around us, bearing us up constantly in our daily walk. Angels help us to succeed in our task of living for God.

**NOTES:**

May the innumerable angels of God ever encompass our lives here and then bear us in their gentle hands into the paradise of God. Awaiting us at the New Jerusalem will be Jesus Christ along with an angel at each gate to welcome us. With the assistance of God and His angels, we will see one another there.

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**NOTES**

**LESSON 28**

**NOTES:**

# ENEMIES OF THE SOUL: THE FLESH

### ROMANS 7:18-25; 8:1-13; I PETER 2:11

When we begin our walk with God, we soon realize that something or someone is not happy about our born-again experience (John 3:1-8). Our newfound experience in Christ becomes the object of attack. Often, there is an insinuation that we never really received the Holy Ghost. Other thoughts, feelings, doubts, and fears began to confront our joy of being saved.

Having enemies who want to destroy us in hell is the age-old experience of the redeemed. Singly and collectively, forces attack our mind, body, soul, and spirit in a concerted effort to separate us from the love of God. Satan's devices and darts are legion, and he uses them to defeat and ultimately destroy every person he can.

Our purpose is not to give honor to our enemies but to expose them as that—enemies. The follow lessons will cover the three basic enemies of our soul. When we analyze our problems, trials, and temptations, we will find that they stem from one or more of these three root causes.

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## DEFINITION

In our context, the word *flesh* does not refer to the physical flesh of the human body. Rather, as we see in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, flesh* comes from the Greek word *sarx*, which in the New Testament usually indicates human nature with its frailties and passions. It encompasses carnality and being carnally minded.

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## ORIGIN

When humans fell in the Garden of Eden, the law of sin, or the sin principle, became a part of the human race. (See Romans 7:18-25.) This corrupt, defiled sinful nature is transmitted from parent to child through procreation. Humanity's bloodline not only carries and transmits physical death but also spiritual death (Genesis 2:9-17; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19).

We inherit from our father Adam our evil nature, which tends to sin. Nothing in this world can remove this nature from us, as long as we live. The Adamic nature is a permanent part of every nationality and passes from generation to generation. God does not take away human desires, feelings, and tendencies when we get saved. Our soul is redeemed and saved, but our body is not yet redeemed, and we still struggle with the

**NOTES:**

sinful human nature. We have this treasure in earthen vessels (II Corinthians 4:7). We will receive a redeemed body when Jesus catches away His church (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Romans 8:11). God's Word calls this event the redemption of the body (Romans 8:23; I Corinthians 15:44; II Corinthians 5:1-8). Then and only then will we be free from the flesh, or sinful nature, as we know it.

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## WORKS OF THE FLESH

The apostle Paul clearly identified several works of the flesh, which help us pinpoint the basis of our problems. (See Galatians 5:19-21.) It is helpful to look up the meanings of each of these words, which we list below as they appear in the King James Version.

1. Adultery
2. Fornication
3. Uncleanness
4. Lasciviousness
5. Idolatry
6. Witchcraft
7. Hatred
8. Variance
9. Emulations
10. Wrath
11. Strife
12. Seditions
13. Heresies
14. Envyings
15. Murders
16. Drunkenness
17. Revellings

**NOTES:**

Paul closed this list with a catch-all phrase, "and such like." Covered under this phrase are all evil inventions and devices that relate to the flesh.

We must shun anything that promotes and incites the kind of conduct just described. We must curb and control carnal actions and desires through a biblical method in order to thwart Satan's plan to destroy us. Each of these works of the flesh is a lethal enemy to the spirituality of the child of God.

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## SCRIPTURAL FACTS CONCERNING THE FLESH

Here are several scriptural facts concerning the flesh; further research will be needed to reveal the full meaning of each.

1. The flesh is weak, but the spirit is willing (Matthew 26:41).
2. The will of the flesh is different from the will of God (John 1:13).
3. The flesh profits nothing (John 6:63).
4. The flesh has many lusts (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:3; 1 Peter 2:11).
5. We are to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh (II Corinthians 7:1).
6. The flesh has many evil desires (Ephesians 2:3).
7. The flesh is not to be trusted (Philippians 3:3-4).
8. If we sow to the flesh, we will reap corruption (Galatians 6:8).
9. The flesh produces many sins (Colossians 2:11).
10. The flesh stains our garment of righteousness (Jude 23).
11. We are not to lean on the flesh (Jeremiah 17:5).
12. The birth of the flesh is different from the birth of the Spirit (John 3:6; Galatians 4:23-29).

God's Word covers the complete spectrum of the flesh, exposing it to the spiritual eye in order to help us stay saved. Armed with this knowledge, we can prepare ourselves accordingly.

**NOTES:**

## OUR BODIES—THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST

After we have been born again, inside the earthly temple of our body there abides both the sin principle and the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20). The indwelling Spirit is a veritable treasure (II Corinthians 4:7). Both Christ and Satan want to be Lord of our lives; hence there is a conflict between Spirit and flesh. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17).

Several synonymous terms describe our condition and position as Christians in this world. As we study the following seven contrasts, we will better understand the conflict going on continually in our lives.

- **Two Births**—Every saint has experienced two distinct births in his or her life, one natural and one spiritual. With two such experiences, how can we expect anything less than a struggle?

  1. What is born of the flesh is flesh (John 3:6). We are born naturally of blood, of the will of the flesh, and of the will of humans (John 1:13).

  2. What is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6). Receiving the Holy Ghost is the birth of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4, 38; I Corinthians 12:13).

- **Allegorical story or type from the Old Testament—**(Galatians 4:23-29).

  1. Ishmael was born after the flesh, by natural human plans and methods.

  2. Isaac was born after the Spirit, by a miracle of God.

- **Two Natures**—Every Christian possesses two natures, one fleshly and one spiritual.

  1. By natural birth, we have a carnal, earthly nature (Romans 1:26; I Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 2:3).

  2. Because we have been born again, we are made partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4). Both natures want to rule, so a fight ensues.

- **Two Walks**—In this instance, to walk means to order one's behavior or conduct. Two roads rise to meet us; Jesus said one was narrow and the other broad. Before we choose one, should look at its destiny, because both of these roads lead somewhere.

  1. We can walk in the flesh (Romans 8:4-8; Galatians 5:16-17), the result of which is death.

  2. We can walk in the Spirit, which has better benefits than walking in the flesh, namely eternal life (Romans 8:4-6; Galatians 5:16).

**NOTES:**

- **Two Laws**—In this context, *law* is a principle rather than a decree or command.

  1. The law of sin and death refers to the original sin principle that humans received at the fall of Adam (Romans 7:18-25; 8:2).

  2. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus delivers us from the law of sin and death (8:1-4).

- **Two Fathers**—In Adam we all die, but in Christ we are all made alive. Adam and Christ serve as the head of two distinct generations; the Christian has both as a father. From each we inherit a nature, mind, and will, along with other attributes.

  1. Adam is our father according to the flesh, when we go to the fountainhead of the human race (Romans 5:12-19; I Corinthians 15:22).

  2. Christ is our heavenly Father. By and through Him and His Word, we are begotten again to a living hope (Romans 5:12-19; I Corinthians 15:22; I Peter 1:23).

- **Two Minds**—Now that we are saved, we have both the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit within us. The intellect, wisdom, and knowledge of both seek to direct our paths. (See Romans 8:5; Ephesians 2:3; Philippians 2:5; 3:19; Colossians 2:18; I Peter 1:13.)

  1. The carnal mind is the enemy of God. It seeks to dominate our thought life and give us directions (Romans 8:6-7; I Corinthians 3:1-4).

  2. Spiritual-mindedness brings life and peace when we walk after the bidding of the Spirit and Word (Romans 8:6-7; I Corinthians 3:1-4).

- **Two Men**—Two different bodies do not exist in us, but in one body dwell two different "men," or natures.

  1. The "old man" is the carnal, sinful, and fleshly man that is born with these tendencies (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22-24).

  2. The other man is the "new man," or the inward man, which needs renewing (Romans 6:6; II Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 4:22-24). The Scripture tells us to put on this new man with its accompanying spiritual virtues and to put off the old man with its sins (Colossians 2:11; 3:8-14).

We can readily see our paradoxical position: we are in the world but not of the world; we belong to Christ but Satan wants us back. Daily we must die to the flesh and walk after the Spirit if we want to be saved.

**NOTES:**

## THE SCRIPTURAL METHOD FOR CONTROLLING THE FLESH

The Bible is concise and clear on how we are to handle this enemy of the soul. Though unpleasant, the method is surprisingly successful. We are to crucify the flesh in order to be alive unto God.

- **Crucifixion**—was a cruel means of death, frowned on by both God and humans. It is one of history's most ignominious ways to die. God's Word declares that those who are crucified are cursed of God (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). Christ was made a curse for us through His crucifixion (Galatians 3:13). Now we have the responsibility of crucifying the flesh in a spiritual sense as a means of self-control.

  1. Our old man is crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6).

  2. Paul was crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20).

  3. Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh (Galatians 5:22-25).

  4. We are to be crucified to the world and the world to us (Galatians 6:14).

  5. Discipleship has three prerequisites (Luke 9:23-25; 14:26-27).

     a. We are to deny ourselves.
     b. We are to take up our cross daily.
     c. We are to follow Jesus.

Prayer, fasting, Bible study, church attendance, altar work, communion, washing the saints' feet, loving our enemies, giving our time and money, and witnessing are a few of the ways that we can crucify the flesh. Every lawful, allowable human desire, no matter how scriptural, must at some time and place be controlled. In this way, we crucify the flesh.

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## NOTES

**LESSON 29**

**NOTES:**

# ENEMIES OF THE SOUL: THE WORLD

## II PETER 2:20-22

Our focus now turns to another subtle enemy of the souls of people—the world. Again, the purpose of these lessons is not to magnify the world or Satan but to expose them for what they really are and to reveal their threat to the Christian.

First, it is important to identify our subject and then focus on it from a biblical perspective.

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## DEFINITIONS

The Scripture uses three important terms to describe the world:

- **Kosmos**—is a Greek word meaning the orderly arrangement of the world, including its inhabitants. It can refer to the sum total of what God has created and specifically to the world as the abode of humans. It is the order of things within which humanity moves and of which humanity is the center. In this sense, it can also refer to the customs, values, and habits of sinful human society. In the New Testament, *world* is usually translated from *kosmos*. The following verses are examples:

  1. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10).

  2. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24).

  3. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

  4. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

- **Aion**—is a Greek word meaning a space or period of time, especially a lifetime. It is used of one's time of life or age. It also means a long space of time, eternity, or forever. It can mean an age, perpetuity, or present or future course. *World* is translated from *aion* in the following verses:

  1. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which

**NOTES:**

believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4).

2. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Timothy 4:10).

3. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

4. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

5. "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22).

- **Oikumene**—is a Greek word for *world* meaning land, globe, or earth. It is the literal ground, earth, or scope of God's creation. It is the inhabited earth. *World* is translated from *oikumene* in the following verses:

1. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

2. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1).

3. "And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5).

4. "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar" (Acts 11:28).

## OUR ENEMY

Our soul's enemy is not the earth, or *oikumene*. It is not really the *kosmos* in the sense of the universe with its inhabitants, but it can be the *kosmos* in the sense of human society and customs, as in I John 2:15-17. Our enemy is certainly the age we live in—the *aion*. From each *aion* there arise inventions, allurements, enticements, carnal trappings, places, and events invented by humans. Every generation produces an atmosphere and environment that is peculiar to its own day, which is destructive to our spiritual lives if we involve ourselves in it. This situation is constantly in a state of flux—ever changing, moving, and reaching out to devour the souls of people.

Problems of fifty years ago may not plague us today; if Jesus tarries, problems today

**NOTES:**

may not be problems fifty years from now. Each generation must be spiritually aware of the enticements, allurements, and evils of its day and not allow these things to separate them from God. As we move forward with new inventions, new devices, and new forces of evil to fight, we must stay abreast of what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Each generation produces its own age (*aion*) and spirit. The world (*kosmos*) of humanity under satanic influence will constantly bring false doctrines, wrong codes of conduct, and worldliness to our society. We must judge each teaching and practice by the Scriptures as to its spirit, its truthfulness, and the direction to which it tends. Spiritual perception is a must; an unmuzzled ministry must fill our pulpits at all times to warn us of our age. Watchmen must ever remain in the tower, sounding the trumpet at the approach of any worldly enemy.

The basic sins—such as lying, stealing, hatred, lust, and murder—exist in every age. Some sinful practices are characteristic of the age; these are the ones against which we must be especially on guard. History records the growth and spread of iniquity over the face of the earth. It is not a polluted atmospheric condition, but one that originates in the heart, mind, and soul of humans, culminating in every kind of conceivable sin. In this sense, the world—the sinful values, customs, atmosphere, and practices of the age—is the enemy of our souls.

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## WHAT DOES THE WORLD COMPRISE?

Regardless of the age in which we live, we will encounter certain elements that make up the world. We can trace the root causes of sin to one of the following things (I John 2:15-17):

1. **Lust of the flesh**

2. **Lust of the eyes**

3. **Pride of life**

We have desires, ambitions, and strong inclinations to be like our contemporaries and to participate in the activities of our age. We must discern satanic devices that are peculiar to our day, or particularly prominent in our day, and then we must shun them and remove them from our lives.

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## SCRIPTURAL WARNINGS

God does not warn us without cause. If no danger existed, God's Word would not impose any restrictions upon us. But there are dangers, and the Word adequately warns us of them; therefore, let us examine the Word of the Lord. Each of the statements relates to the dangers of the world. Some of these verses speak of *aion* and some of *kosmos*.

**NOTES:**

1. The world has its pollutions (II Peter 2:20).
2. The world has its corruption (II Peter 1:4).
3. The world has its cares (Matthew 13:22; Luke 8:14).
4. The world has its god (II Corinthians 4:4).
5. The world has its course (Ephesians 2:2).
6. The world has its lusts (Titus 2:12).
7. The world has its fashion (I Corinthians 7:31).
8. The world has its evil (Galatians 1:4).
9. The world has its wisdom (I Corinthians 1:20; 2:6; 3:18; James 3:15-17).
10. The world has its spirit (I Corinthians 2:12).

Let us be on guard against the encroachment of these things into our lives. We must not allow them to separate us from the love of God.

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## A SCRIPTURAL METHOD FOR HANDLING THE WORLD

Knowing the enemy is one thing; knowing how to conquer him is quite another. Simplistic and elementary though it may sound, the biblical method for handling the world is to overcome it. It is quite a challenge when we think of the task, yet our Lord expects nothing less of us.

In the original Greek, the word *overcome* means to subdue, conquer, prevail, or get the victory. *Webster's Dictionary* defines it as to get the better of in competition, master, suppress, prevail over, surmount, or overwhelm. Here are scriptural teachings about overcoming:

1. Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33).
2. We are to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).
3. There is a victory that overcomes the world (I John 5:4-5).
4. We can overcome because of the power within us (I John 4:1-4).
5. If we overcome, we will inherit all things (Revelation 21:7).

**NOTES:**

God has made some glorious promises to overcomers. The following seven promises are worthy of further study.

| PROMISES TO OVERCOMERS | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ephesus | Eat of tree of life | Revelation 2:7 |
| Smyrna | Not be hurt by second death | Revelation 2:11 |
| Pergamos | Eat of manna, receive a white stone | Revelation 2:17 |
| Thyatira | Have power over the nations | Revelation 2:26 |
| Sardis | Be clothed in white raiment | Revelation 3:5 |
| Philadelphia | Be a pillar in temple of God | Revelation 3:12 |
| Laodicea | Sit with Christ in His throne | Revelation 3:21 |

God does not take us out of this world to protect us the moment we are born again. Only the Rapture will eventually solve the problem of getting His church out of a worldly environment. Until then we must live, work, attend school, be neighbors, and walk among our peers in society. Wheat and tares will grow together, sheep and goats will pasture together, and two will grind at the mill (work) together. Side by side, we must walk until God separates us. While awaiting His return we must be a separate, holy, and a distinguishable people, remaining unspotted by the world.

While using this world, may we never abuse it (I Corinthians 7:31). God's promises are to the overcomers, not to the conformers (Romans 12:1-2). Our age needs a witness, and we are the light of the world: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

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**LESSON 30**

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# ENEMIES OF THE SOUL: THE DEVIL

## JAMES 4:7-10; I PETER 5:8-9

In examining the enemies of the soul, it is imperative that we study Satan, for what more vicious enemy could anyone encounter than the devil himself? Satan not only wages personal attacks against us, but he also works through the other two enemies we have studied, the flesh and the world.

Satan is a fallen angel and knows his destiny. Now he seeks to destroy everyone he can. Satan and his angels will have the lake of fire as their final portion (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10). What is tragic is that he is taking multitudes with him into that terrible place.

Satan is devious and vicious in his attacks against the saints of God. The devil is our enemy, and in the flesh we are no match for him. But God's Spirit, the Holy Ghost, within us is greater than he who is in the world (I John 4:4).

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## ORIGIN OF SATAN

Return to the lesson "Knowing Our Adversary" and study it thoroughly, since it is interwoven with this lesson. We will repeat some basics from that lesson.

In the beginning, God created Lucifer as an angel, but he rebelled against God and led other angels into his error. God then cast him out of heaven and to the earth, where he now works against the kingdom of God. (See Isaiah 14:12-15; Luke 10:18; John 8:44; I John 3:8.)

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## WHAT SATAN IS

Our adversary uses every method to destroy the child of God. Knowing what he is equips us with the knowledge we need to withstand him with the help of God. The Bible describes him in the following terms:

1. The tempter (Matthew 4:3).

2. A liar (John 8:44).

3. An accuser (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Revelation 12:3-10).

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4. A hinderer (I Thessalonians 2:18).

5. A murderer (John 8:44; Romans 5:12-21; Hebrews 2:14-15).

6. The god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4).

7. The deceiver (I Timothy 2:14; Revelation 12:9; 20:3, 8, 10).

8. Our adversary (I Peter 5:8).

9. The destroyer (Psalm 17:4).

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## SYNONYMOUS TERMS

The Bible also uses the following names and titles to identify our enemy. These different terms help expose his array of evil works.

1. Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-14).

2. Dragon (Revelation 12:3-17).

3. Satan (Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:9).

4. Serpent (Revelation 12:9; II Corinthians 11:3).

5. Adversary (I Peter 5:8; I Timothy 5:14).

6. Devil (Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:11).

7. The wicked [one] (Ephesians 6:16).

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## THINGS SATAN IS LIKE

The Bible compares Satan to the following beings. Although he is none of them in reality, he poses as them in order to deceive, frighten, and destroy Christians.

1. A lion (I Peter 5:8).

2. A minister of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:3-4, 14-15; Galatians 1:8-9).

3. A fowl (Matthew 13:1-19).

4. An angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14).

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5. A wolf (Matthew 10:16; John 10:12; Acts 20:29).

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The previous four sections provide a fairly comprehensive summary of what Satan is and what he is like. To be forewarned is to be forearmed in our battle against Satan and his devices. It is impossible to pinpoint every place and event of satanic activity; nevertheless, we will discuss two specific areas that need attention in our lives.

- **Giving Place to the Devil**—A saint of God can give place to the devil, but this does not mean he or she is dominated, possessed, or controlled by Satan. Giving place to the devil refers to a temporary failure of the Christian through temptation, lust, or testing. We are warned against allowing this to happen, but if it does, we should repent, correct the error, and go on for God.

- **Thoughts and Imaginations**—Our mind is one of the most vulnerable and accessible areas of our lives to the devil. Although we can control our thoughts, we cannot stop thoughts from entering our mind. This strategic area becomes the object of Satan's most vicious attacks. While Satan can put thoughts in our mind, he is powerless to make us act upon them.

If we allow evil thoughts to remain active and alive in our minds, they will become *intentions* of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). Fulfilling these intentions is a sin of commission, which begins as only a thought (James 1:12-16). Sin destroys our reputation, character, and others' confidence in us. Restoration is available, but sins of a moral nature leave scars and reproaches (Proverbs 6:27-33).

Failure can be present within us before it is ever exposed to others. Purity of mind is essential to spiritual survival for every Christian.

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## A SCRIPTURAL METHOD FOR HANDLING THE DEVIL

Through the years, fanciful thinkers have projected untold means and methods for handling the devil, but nothing succeeds like using the biblical method. Stomping, running, or scaring the devil away are expressions or antics that have no biblical basis. Sensational antics leave others frustrated and the devil undefeated. When we use God's method, Satan will flee from the child of God. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

1. **Submit to God**—This is the preparatory step to defeat the devil. So many try to bypass this step and end up in despair because Satan still torments them. Submission to God and His Word are absolute musts to defeat this enemy of the soul.

2. **Resist the devil**—I Peter 5:9 tells us to resist him steadfastly in the faith. *Resist* in this context means to stand against, oppose, withstand, and keep

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from yielding to and being affected by. Simple resistance to Satan's advances is the scriptural method of bringing about this defeat. When we are tempted, oppressed, depressed, discouraged, and tested, we need to keep doing the things Christians should do, not out of inspiration but by commitment. Then we will be victorious.

3. **He will flee**—What a promise, a hope, and a joy! Tradition says that Job remained faithful in his trial for about one year before victory came. Nothing drives Satan away like resisting his advances.

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## HOW TO RESIST THE DEVIL

We can offer many forms of resistance, but here are four basic methods in the Scripture that will greatly assist us in our efforts to resist Satan.

1. **Use of Spiritual Weapons**—Bringing railing accusations against the devil will not work. Michael, the archangel, has given us the answer by his example. When the devil disputed with him over the body of Moses, he simply said, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). (See Zechariah 3:1-10.) Spiritual weapons are at our disposal to cast down imaginations, thoughts, and every thing that exalts itself against our Lord and us (II Corinthians 10:3-5).

2. **Use of Prayer and Fasting**—A demon-possessed boy could not be delivered by the disciples due to a lack of prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:14-21). If we will cultivate a relationship with God through prayer and fasting, we will be able to resist the devil when he seeks to invade our lives.

3. **Use of the Word of God**—Jesus did not use any more power to overcome Satan during His temptation than what God makes available to each of us. In all three instances when the devil approached Jesus, He used Scripture to defeat him (Matthew 4:1-11).

4. **Use of the Armor of God**—Though called the armor of God, it actually becomes our armor when we appropriate it to ourselves. We can quench fiery darts, withstand in the evil day, and stand against the wiles of the devil when we have on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-18).

At our disposal and free for the asking is everything and more that we need to subdue the enemy of our souls. Spiritual failure is not the result of improper and unavailable supplies; we fail because we do not use what God has provided for us. Let us arise in the power of His might and save ourselves from this corrupt generation. Eternity is before us; if we gain the world and lose our soul we have profited nothing. Yes, we have enemies, but thank God, we have resources more powerful than all our enemies combined. Let us defeat them in Jesus' name.

**LESSON 31**

**NOTES:**

# WHAT TO DO WITH LIFE'S BURDENS

## PSALM 55:4-8, 22; GALATIANS 6:1-5

Something immediately clicks in our minds when we hear the word *burden*. From the past, our memory recalls a time of untold stress we once endured or the present agony of a burdened heart.

Without respect of persons, life imposes upon us seemingly insurmountable mountains of trial and pressure. We do not become so skillful in life that we can escape. The burly hands of burdens crush our hearts and minds until there seems to be no escape. Since this is the common lot of life, what are we to do? We have no wings as David wished for, so he could fly away (Psalm 55:6). The darkness of the night cannot hide us from the seeking hand of life's burdens (Job 3:1-10). Yet God has a preplanned, prewritten, time-tested formula for handling life's burdens. Applying His principles makes life's burdens manageable through Him.

The Bible makes three direct statements about burdens that, on the surface, may seem contradictory. Let us study each of them.

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## BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

Galatians 6:1-2 instructs, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

In this context, the word *burden* comes from the Greek word *baros,* which means weight, load, abundance, something making a demand on our material and spiritual reserves. Saints should come to the rescue of a Christian brother or sister who is overwhelmed by a burden of spiritual failure. Many types of burdens cause God's children to be downcast, weak, lukewarm, and unfaithful. Upon observing or discerning such conditions, we are to get under the burden with the person in need and help him or her bear it. As quickly as the bloodstream rushes in with its powerful antibodies to aid us in time of accident or infection, so should the church aid someone who is under attack from the enemy.

We need a strong support system for each other. We cannot handle everything alone. At some time, life will hand us a load that will crush us if we try to bear it alone. Our mutual spiritual survival is dependent upon our supporting burdened people through prayers, encouragement, empathy, and sympathy. In the church there should be strong familial ties, brotherhood, camaraderie, and a feeling that we are our brother's keeper. We cannot allow an independent, macho, self-sustaining spirit and attitude to rob us of needed fellowship and support.

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Occasionally we will need help, but we also have the resources to help others. Will we withhold good when it is in the power of our hand to do good? (Proverbs 3:27). God cursed Meroz because the inhabitants did not come to the aid of their brethren (Judges 5:23).

Below are a few of the many passages of Scripture that point out our personal responsibility toward one another. Let us accept the challenge to fulfill them in our lives as we study them.

1. The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak (Romans 15:1).

2. We are to support the weak (I Thessalonians 5:14).

3. David's iniquities were as a heavy burden to him (Psalm 38:4).

4. We are to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15).

5. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus rebuked the elder brother's wrong attitude toward his brother who had failed (Luke 15:11-32).

6. Though a good person falls, he will not be utterly cast down (Psalm 37:23-28).

7. Jesus prayed for Peter when Satan desired to have him and sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31-32).

When we bear one another's burdens, we fulfill one of the highest principles of the Scripture, known as the law of Christ.

- **The Law of Christ**—We should let this principle be the guiding force of our lives, as it was in the life of Christ.

    1. On Him was laid the iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

    2. He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses (Matthew 8:17).

    3. He seeks the one lost sheep when it goes astray (Luke 15:4-7).

    4. As the Samaritan helped the man who was robbed and left beside the road, He comes where we are and helps us (Luke 10:33-37).

In the Atonement, we see Christ not only as the sacrifice that dies for us but also as the scapegoat that bears away our sins and burdens (Leviticus 16:1-28). What a beautiful example for us to follow in bearing one another's burdens!

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## EVERYONE SHALL BEAR HIS OWN BURDEN

A few verses below the statement that we are to bear one another's burdens, the Bible seems to reverse its position by informing us that we are to bear our own burdens. "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:3-5). This position is not contradictory, however, for the Scripture here deals with another type of burden.

In this context, the word *burden* comes from the Greek word *phortion,* which means something carried as a task or service. Galatians 6:4 informs us that we are to prove our own work, thereby laying upon us the responsibility of shouldering our share of the load of God's kingdom. Each of us must bear certain tasks and obligations. No one else should have to carry our part of the load in the local church. Christians must accept that God requires something of them, and they cannot shift this responsibility to someone else if they are to examine and demonstrate their own work.

The following verses of Scripture vividly portray individual responsibility.

1. We are to take upon us the yoke of Christ (Matthew 11:28-30).

2. We are to present our body a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).

3. Three requirements are demanded of us if we are to be His disciples (Luke 9:23):

   a. We are to deny ourselves.
   b. We are to take up our cross daily.
   c. We are to follow Christ.

4. We have a responsibility to use the talents God gives us (Matthew 25:14-30).

5. In the work of the Tabernacle, the Levites had certain burdens and services they were to render to God and people (Numbers 4:15-49).

No one can go to church in our place; neither can anyone fill our place in prayer, fasting, finances, altar work, and personal witnessing. Each church needs many kinds and types of workers. Why not make our services available to our local church? Great needs exist for people to be janitors; cut the grass and trim the shrubs; clean the baptistery; tend the nursery; teach Sunday school; clean windows; cook; clean the parking lot; change light bulbs; sing in the choir; paint; decorate; do plumbing, electrical, and carpentry work; run the sound system; visit the sick, shut-in, and elderly; type; usher; play in the orchestra; and so on. The list of workers needed in the work of God is endless.

We will never be happy if we are not involved. Yes, these are burdens, and that is what the Bible calls them, but do we want to sail through life on someone else's money, work, and labor? Deep inside, we do not. Something in each of us longs to do our part and

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bear our own burden. I challenge you to get involved, put your hand to the plow, never look back, and do with all your might what your hand finds to do.

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## CASTING OUR BURDENS ON THE LORD

Psalm 55:22 says, "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (See also Psalm 55:4-8.) Obviously, the two types of burdens we have studied previously are not to be cast upon the Lord. Here the Scripture deals with an entirely different type of burden.

In this context, *burden* comes from the Hebrew word *yehab*, which means what is given by providence and ascribed to us as our lot or burden. The burdens that David spoke of are ones over which we have no control. Often the bearer does not understand them. They can be spiritual or physical. In many cases, they are humanly impossible to bear but at the same time they cannot be avoided or escaped. Like a Siamese twin, often they cannot be removed from our lives.

Burdens of this nature can make us unhappy, tormented, and bitter if we are not careful. To avoid this, we must cast these burdens upon the Lord. In this category of burdens are sickness; disease; death of loved ones; tragedy; loss of limbs, hearing, or sight; financial disaster; broken homes; wayward children; a child with mental retardation or serious illness; persecution; incapacitating injuries; and so on. There is an endless list of life's taxing burdens.

If we find ourselves in a situation such as this, we must refuse to allow bitterness, doubt, anger, or hurt to dominate our spirit. In such times, we should cling to the words of Peter: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).

When we cast our care and burdens on the Lord, He sustains us (Psalm 55:22). To *sustain* means to keep in existence, maintain, keep going, keep supplied with necessities, carry the weight or burden of, strengthen the spirit, comfort, and encourage.

There are two ways in which God can sustain us. We should be submissive regardless of the method He chooses.

- **Remove the Burden**—God can and often uses this method of sustaining us; it is by far the easiest for us when He chooses to do so. Here are some examples:

  1. The cup passes from us.

  2. We are healed of sickness or infirmity.

  3. Our persecutor is taken out of the way, as Herod was.

  4. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, thus alleviating the family's sorrow.

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5. God healed Job, gave him a family again, and restored his wealth.

If God does not see fit to remove or take away the cause of the burden when we cast it upon Him, He will use a second avenue of sustaining us.

- **Help Us Bear the Burden**—Although this is difficult for us, it is often not God's will to remove from us the burden we are bearing. God's abiding promise remains the same even in these times—He will sustain us. Here are some examples:

  1. God preserved the New Testament church in persecution.

  2. The cup was not removed from Jesus, but an angel did strengthen Him.

  3. Paul's thorn was not removed, but God gave him grace.

  4. In temptation, God makes a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.

We should never doubt or question God's sustaining methods, for His promises are yes and amen, and He abides faithful. David outlined seven personal responsibilities of the believer in such times (Psalm 37:1-37):

1. We are to trust in the Lord and do good (verse 3).

2. We are to delight ourselves in the Lord (verse 4).

3. We are to commit our way unto the Lord (verse 5).

4. We are to rest in the Lord (verse 7).

5. We are to cease from anger (verse 8).

6. We are to wait upon the Lord (verse 34).

7. We are to mark the perfect person and behold the upright (verse 37).

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Now we know what God wants us to do with life's burdens. The chorus of an old song is applicable to this lesson and is good to sing as we face life's burdens:

Leave them there;
Leave them there;
Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.
If you'll trust and never doubt,
He will surely bring you out;
Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.

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**LESSON 32**

**NOTES:**

# ENDURANCE

## HEBREWS 6:13-15; JAMES 5:7-11

Of the thousands of words God inspired people to write, the word *endurance* arises from obscurity to teach us great lessons. We hear little preaching and testifying on endurance, because it can sound like a lack of faith, victory, and success. Enduring is not a lack of any of these things, but it speaks of grace and glory on the part of the person under stress.

Christians are oriented to a ministry and thought pattern of faith. We often think that if we possess enough faith we will automatically find a supernatural escape from every problem, sickness, or trial. By no means should we belittle God's delivering power or hinder faith for deliverance from these things. At the same time, the idea that faith will give us an automatic escape from everything is simply wrong. God's Word teaches us that we must endure some things. We sometimes forget that walking with God is a vocation, not a vacation (Ephesians 4:1).

We often think that as Christians we should never suffer even the slightest privation. Much is preached about rising above difficulties and problems to a high plane of living where all is smooth sailing. Encountering and enduring hardships tend to discourage us and to fill our hearts with unbelief. Our society has developed a generation of both legal and illegal pill poppers who strive to rid themselves of the slightest nervousness, depression, and oppression. But we need to face facts and realities: living for God involves enduring some things. Although God could give us an escape from all difficulty, He does not, simply because we need to learn the blessings of endurance.

This does not mean that we should sit down and expect nothing from God. To the contrary, we should accept God's promises and believe Him for great things, but at the same time we must not lose our balance. We must accept that some things must be endured. Prayer and research in God's Word will give us the answer as to whether we must endure a situation or whether deliverance will come. Whichever God chooses to do, we should accept His will and serve Him with joy.

We can move mountains, be healed, and have victory through faith in God. God's promises to those with faith are many. How beautiful to see and feel God opening impossible doors and solving insoluble problems! Every one of His promises is true; yet the same faith that brings deliverance also enables us to endure whatever God may assign us. In fairness to God's Word, we need to consider both deliverance and endurance, so that we will not despair in the time of trial. Deliverance is not excluded, nor is it given us in everything. Endurance is a Bible teaching, just as deliverance is.

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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ENDURE?

Since we are all called upon to endure certain and varied things in life, we should have a clear and concise meaning of the word. *Endure* comes from the Greek word *hupomeno*, which means to stay under, remain, undergo, bear trials, have fortitude, persevere, bear from underneath, and undergo hardship. *Webster's Dictionary* says it means to stand, bear, undergo, put up with, tolerate, and hold out.

When deliverance does not come, we still stay saved and walk with God, while carrying the load of whatever we are called upon to endure. I Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." *Bear* here means to endure.

Only the strong, well-grounded, and deep-rooted will endure (Mark 4:16-17). Because of a lack of roots, those on stony ground will not be able to endure. To plow with the gospel plow, to enter the narrow gate, and to watch our adversary diligently all demand a strong, enduring spirit. Through faith and God's help we can endure in our lives. Below are some of the things we may be called upon to endure.

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## PERSECUTION

Jesus Christ came to build a church that the gates of hell would not be able to prevail against. From infancy this church has been the object of persecution. Apostles, New Testament saints, and saints of every generation to the present time have suffered under the cruel hand of persecution. God has miraculously delivered some from these fiery attacks, as He did Peter, Paul, and Silas from jail. Others, like the apostle James, John the Baptist, and thousands of others, have had to give their lives for the truth.

Persecution has not stopped God's great church. While persecutions have raged, the gospel has spread, hypocrites have separated from the church, and the true saints have been refined. Great testimonies of deliverance have come from the annals of history, as God gloriously delivered some from their persecutions. Others were called upon to endure to death, with deliverance never coming in this life. May God give us the fortitude and resilience to stay true to Him regardless of what life brings! Here are some scriptural points about persecution.

1. The church of Thessalonica was being persecuted when Paul wrote his second epistle to them (II Thessalonians 1:4).

2. Paul mentioned some of his persecutions and reminded us that those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer the same (II Timothy 3:11-12).

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## AFFLICTION

Affliction covers a wide range of meanings in the Bible, but in the general sense it means that we face distress, tight places, hardships, and sufferings. God does not always deliver His people from their afflictions, but He always gives them grace to endure, as the following points demonstrate.

1. Paul encouraged Timothy, a young minister, to endure afflictions (II Timothy 4:5).

2. The Thessalonian church received the Word of God in much affliction (I Thessalonians 1:6).

3. Job's troubles, sickness, and circumstances were called afflictions; these he had to endure for some time before victory came (Job 10:15; 30:16; James 5:10-11).

4. Infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses, along with a thorn in the flesh seemed to be Paul's lot all through life; these he patiently endured by the grace of God (II Corinthians 12:1-10).

Our afflictions are many (Psalm 34:19), but they are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (Romans 8:18; II Corinthians 4:17). Moses chose the afflictions of the people of God over the pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:25). If affliction becomes our lot, we should never despair, for God gives grace to endure.

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## HARDNESS

*Hardness*, in the context of God's Word, means undergoing hardship that comes upon us because we are Christians. Christians are soldiers, and the life of a soldier has never been an easy one. Battles, trials, and difficulties are the constant lot of the child of God; Satan sees to that. Are we willing to undergo a few hardships and endure a few privations if necessary for the gospel's sake?

1. Paul admonished Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier (II Timothy 2:3).

2. John Mark, a helper of Paul and Barnabas in his early life, was not able to endure the hardships of the ministry, so he returned home (Acts 12:25; 13:5-13).

Not every day of our Christian life will be easy; at times, we will be called upon to endure hardness. In this situation, we must keep in mind the eternal reward waiting at the end.

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## GRIEF

*Grief,* in the context of this lesson, does not refer to the type of grief we have when a loved one dies. *Grief* in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *lupe,* which means a state of sorrow, heaviness, or sadness that comes to us as a result of our being buffeted and suffering wrongfully for doing well. Our good and righteous life can be filled with grief from false accusations, criticism, and rejection by others. We must often endure tears and sorrow in order to identify with Christ.

When facing this dilemma, we should remember that Christ was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3-4). Let us keep the following passages in mind when called upon to endure grief.

1. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (I Peter 2:19-20).

2. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; . . . for it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (I Peter 3:14, 17).

3. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. . . . But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:14-16).

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## CHASTENING

Because God loves us He not only blesses us, but He also chastens us (Hebrews 12:5-11). Chastening has to do with instruction, correction, training, and discipline. God chastens us to keep us from being condemned with the world (I Corinthians 11:32). No one enjoys or delights in chastisement, nor is it something we should try to escape through supernatural means. The Christian must endure chastisement. Without it we lose our sonship with Jesus Christ and become illegitimate children in His sight. Chastisement is never for our destruction, but always for our good.

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## TEMPTATION

James, to our amazement, said that the person who endures temptation is blessed (James 1:12). God has promised us deliverance in times of temptation in order to be

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proved. When we endure and do not receive deliverance from temptation, we are blessed. Temptation falls into two categories in the Scripture: (1) an enticement to evil and (2) a test or trial.

God never entices us with evil, although He may allow Satan to do so. There are times when God tests and tries us to prove our dedication and consecration to Him. God tried and proved Abraham by commanding him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice upon the altar (Genesis 22:1; Hebrews 11:17). Abraham was not enticed to do evil; God was proving Abraham's love for Him. Christians cannot evade or avoid times of temptation, but when they come, we should not feel backslidden just because we are being tempted. Temptation is not a sin; succumbing to it is. If we endure temptation, victory will be ours (I Corinthians 10:13; James 5:10-11).

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## CROSS

Jesus Christ endured the cross and the contradiction of sinners against Himself (Hebrews 12:1-3). Christ's cross was not joyous; it was the joy set before Him that helped Him endure it. In order to save us He could not be delivered from it; therefore, only one thing remained—to endure it. Today, we are called upon to bear a cross also.

Jesus laid three demands upon us if we want be His disciples (Luke 9:23): (1) We must deny ourselves. (2) We must take up our cross daily. (3) We must follow Jesus Christ. By the cross we bear, we are crucified to the world and the world to us (Galatians 6:14). The offense of this cross has never ceased and never will; the Christian must bear its reproach (Galatians 5:11). Our identity with Him is through the cross (Matthew 10:38; 16:24-26). Cross bearing, in the truest sense of the word, will never be fun or easy; its heaviness and cruelty will remain until the day we lay the cross down and pick up the crown. May God help us to endure the cross, as we pick it up daily to walk with Him.

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We are called with a heavenly calling with many precious promises, yet there is some enduring to be done (Hebrews 6:13-15). Those who endure to the end will be saved (Matthew 10:22; 24:13). God asks us, "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?" (Ezekiel 22:14). Surely we can say yes if our heart is filled with the love of God, for "charity . . . endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:7).

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**LESSON 33**

**NOTES:**

# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

## GALATIANS 5:22-23; JOHN 15:1-8, 16

Fruit bearing is one of the great doctrines of the Bible, deserving in-depth study and consideration. Each Christian should seek to produce the fruit of the Spirit in his or her life. Our pursuit of holiness is contingent upon the fruit of the Spirit existing in our lives. Bearing spiritual fruit eliminates many problems in our lives and creates a climate for healthy relationships in the home, in the church, and among our peers.

Bearing the fruit of the Spirit is one of the most important teachings of Scripture. Although we can attain the fruit of the Spirit, it is not a one-time accomplishment that brings us a lifetime lease on it. We must wage a continual battle in order to maintain this fruit.

God has made this fruit available and accessible to us through the power of the Holy Ghost. Allowing the Spirit to produce fruit in our lives is our responsibility and challenge. Within ourselves it is impossible, but we can allow the Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit. Allowing God's Word to guide and instruct us is essential.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The Scripture points out four important reasons for the importance and essentiality of bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

1. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). Jesus here gave us a foolproof method of identifying false prophets. What a person is in reality is far more important than what he says or even preaches. Good fruit, without question, indicates a good tree.

2. Wisdom has two sources: one is from the earth, the other from above (James 3:14-18). One of the identifying factors of heavenly wisdom is that it is full of mercy and good fruits. James said that the fruit of righteousness can only be sown in peace by those who make peace. Righteousness and the fruit it produces cannot be sown and produced in an environment of confusion and trouble. Individuals and church congregations must produce an atmosphere of peace for righteousness to prevail. Isaiah 32:16-17 gives some interesting facts concerning righteousness that deserve consideration and study:

   a. Righteousness remains in the fruitful field.
   b. The work of righteousness is peace.
   c. The effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance.

**NOTES:**

3. The working of signs, wonders, and miracles being wrought through people is not the criterion upon which we judge their being right or wrong. What we are is more important than what we do. Gifts are often external while fruit is internal. It is in the inward parts that God desires truth (Psalm 51:6). Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, performing limited miracles, but they were not of God (Exodus 7:11-12; 8:7, 16-19: II Timothy 3:8).

   Bearing the fruit of the Spirit and being doctrinally right are more important than seeing miracles (Deuteronomy 13:1-11). Of course, we should see miracles; we should in no way minimize miracles and the working of the Spirit.

4. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). God created the fruit tree to produce fruit after its kind whose seed is in itself (Genesis 1:11-12). The seed of reproduction is housed in the fruit that the tree bears. The primary function of any tree is to reproduce itself; the secondary function is fruit bearing. Functionally, these are so joined that when a tree has fruit, it has seeds of reproduction. When Christians bear the fruit of the Spirit, the seed is in the fruit. Others can behold and ingest our Christianity, and it is reproduced in them through the new birth. For this reason, Solomon said the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.

Every living organism has three inherent indwelling factors, assuring continued existence. All three are inherent in the Christian experience and need our attention.

1. **Growth**—Varying stages of growth are normal in every living thing. Size is not so much a factor as maturity; with maturity comes development in quality, content, and size. Christians should and must grow to survive.

2. **Healing**—Survival through accident, disease, and other debilitating factors comes through healing. Problems, hurts, and failures are not fatal; God has healing qualities inherent in the new birth, assuring our spiritual health if we will apply them.

3. **Reproduction**—Reproductive abilities exist within every living organism. God's church is a living organism capable of reproducing itself over and over in the lives of others through the personal testimonies of its members.

Fruit bearing is not only important but is essential to the propagation of truth throughout the world. Powerful reproductive forces accompany fruit bearing.

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## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Due to limited space, we will discuss in limited form each portion of the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23. I encourage you to expand upon each of these as you study or teach this manual. Basic definitions from *Dake's Annotated Bible* and

**NOTES:**

*Webster's New World Dictionary* are provided; research will yield deeper and more far-reaching definitions.

- **Love**—a strong ardent, tender, compassionate devotion to the well-being of someone (Dake); God's benevolent concern for humans, humans' devout attachment to God, and the feeling of benevolence and brotherhood that people should have for each other (Webster).

  Love is a vast biblical subject, needing study and application in all our lives. God's love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:5) and can become so ardent and ingrained in us until *nothing* can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39). Paul's inspired teaching on love in I Corinthians 13:1-13 is the finest ever produced; read it, remember it, and apply it in your life. God is love, and when we have the Spirit of God in our lives, one of the products of the Spirit is love.

- **Joy**—emotional excitement, gladness, and delight over blessings received or expected for self and others (Dake); a very glad feeling, happiness, great pleasure, or delight; the cause of joy or happiness or the expression of this feeling (Webster).

  We live in a world that sorely lacks abiding joy, but as Christians, joy should emanate from our lives. Sorrow, problems, and trouble come to each life, yet the saved should know the deep joy that sustains even in their darkest hour.

  1. Jesus wants His joy to remain in us that our joy may be full (John 15:11; 16:24).

  2. The joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

  3. In God's presence is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11).

  4. Christians rejoice with joy unspeakable (I Peter 1:8).

  5. The kingdom of God is "joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

  6. With joy we draw water from the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3).

- **Peace**—the state of quietness, rest, repose, harmony, order, and security in the midst of turmoil, strife, and temptation (Dake); freedom from war or civil strife; calm, quiet, and tranquility; an undisturbed state of mind, absence of mental conflict, and serenity (Webster).

  Eighty-five percent of recorded history is about war. Peace is not the absence of war, although it is certainly unknown in war. God's Word has the prescription for peace that humans seek.

**NOTES:**

1. The kingdom of God is "peace . . . in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

2. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6; Romans 15:33; Ephesians 2:14).

3. Great peace have they that love God's law (Psalm 119:165).

4. Wisdom that is from above is peaceable (James 3:17-18).

5. Spiritual-mindedness produces peace (Romans 8:6).

6. Chastisement yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11).

7. Perfect peace comes to the one whose mind is stayed on the Lord (Isaiah 26:3).

As children of God, we can be like the ocean. Though a storm rages on the surface, deep within there is a calm.

- **Longsuffering**—patient endurance to bear long with the frailties, offenses, injustices, and provocations of others, without murmuring and resentment (Dake); bearing injuries, insults, trouble, etc., for a long time; the state of being patient and not easily provoked; long and patient endurance of injuries, insults, troubles, etc. (Webster).

  1. God is longsuffering toward us and is an example of how we should be toward others (II Peter 3:9, 15).

  2. Ministers are to preach and exhort with longsuffering (II Timothy 4:2).

  3. Longsuffering is one of the virtues and articles of spiritual clothing that Christians are to put on (Colossians 1:10-11; 3:12).

  4. In both the Old and New Testaments, one of the attributes of God was longsuffering (Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; I Timothy 1:16).

  Job, Joseph, Paul, and many others in the Scripture set forth an example for us of longsuffering.

- **Gentleness**—a disposition to be gentle, soft-spoken, kind, even tempered, cultured, and refined in character and conduct (Dake); the quality of being gentle; mildness, tenderness, and softness (Webster).

  1. David said that the gentleness of God had made him great (II Samuel 22:36; Psalm 18:35).

  2. Wisdom that is from above is gentle (James 3:17).

**NOTES:**

3. Paul used gentleness to appeal to the Corinthians (II Corinthians 10:1).

4. Ministers are to exhibit gentleness (I Thessalonians 2:7; II Timothy 2:24; Titus 3:2).

Gentleness is a beautiful word, carrying depth and expression. Any living creature that has lost its fury and becomes gentle is loved, drawn close to, and admired. A grace of gentleness should belong to us who know the power of the Spirit.

- **Goodness**—the state of being good, kind, virtuous, benevolent, generous, and God-like in life and conduct (Dake); the state or quality of being good; specifically virtue, excellence, kindness, generosity, and benevolence (Webster).

1. God will reward the good and faithful (Matthew 25:21).

2. God's goodness leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

3. Hezekiah and Josiah provide beautiful examples in goodness (II Chronicles 32:32; 35:26).

4. The following facets of the Christian life should be characterized by goodness:

   a. Warfare (I Timothy 1:18).
   b. Being a soldier (II Timothy 2:3).
   c. Conscience (I Timothy 1:5, 19; Hebrews 13:18).
   d. Works (I Timothy 2:10; 6:18).
   e. Foundation (I Timothy 6:19).
   f. Conversation (conduct) (James 3:13; I Peter 3:16).
   g. Fight of faith (I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 4:7).

Goodness, one of life's simpler virtues, eludes so many. May we as Christians pursue, obtain, and manifest it in our lives.

George Washington Carver, who was born a slave, later became highly educated and taught at Iowa University. Going south to help his own race, he endured much suffering and hardship. Achieving fame but no fortune, he turned down great offers and became friends to three presidents. At his death this epitaph was placed on his tomb: "He could have added fame and fortune, but he cared for neither; he found happiness and honor in being helpful to the world." Though costly, may this type goodness be ours.

- **Faith**—the living, divinely implanted, acquired and created principle of inward and wholehearted confidence, trust, assurance, and reliance in God and all that He says (Dake); unquestioning belief, complete trust, confidence, or reliance (Webster). (See lesson 2 for an in-depth study of faith.)

**NOTES:**

- **Meekness**—the disposition to be gentle, kind, even-balanced in temper and passions, patient in suffering injuries without feeling a spirit of revenge (Dake); patient and mild, not inclined to anger or resentment (Webster).

  1. Moses was a meek man (Numbers 12:3).

  2. The meek shall inherit the earth (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5).

  3. We are to give answers concerning the hope within us with meekness (I Peter 3:15).

  4. Brethren overtaken in a fault are to be restored in a spirit of meekness (Galatians 6:1).

  5. The believer is to put on meekness as a garment (Colossians 3:12).

  6. We are to receive the Word of God with meekness (James 1:21).

  7. Meekness should be a pursuit of the holy (I Timothy 6:11).

  Meekness is not weakness. It should be desired and displayed in every Christian's life.

- **Temperance**—self-control, a moderation in the indulgence of the appetites and passions (Dake); self-restraint in conduct, expression, indulgence of the appetites; moderation (Webster).

  1. Temperance is one of the seven things we are to add to our faith (II Peter 1:6).

  2. A bishop, or overseer, is to be temperate (Titus 1:7-8).

  3. Time and experience should teach us the value of temperance (Titus 2:2).

  4. Striving for the mastery demands temperance in all things (I Corinthians 9:24-27).

  We achieve balance in our lives when we live by the Spirit's directive of temperance.

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## "AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW"

Pursuing and acquiring the fruit of the Spirit is absolutely uninhibited by any restraint of divine or human law (Galatians 5:23). We are not hampered, hindered, or stopped from attaining this lofty goal of fruit bearing by any ordinance.

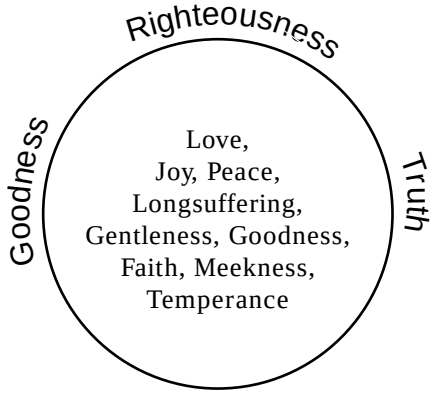
**NOTES:**

God's decrees and principles not only demand fruit bearing but also enable and enhance our right and privilege to bear fruit. Nothing binds or holds us from the glorious fruit of the Spirit of God in our lives; we stand without excuse. Righteous ones are not restricted or reproved by the law of God; they are enabled by it (I Timothy 1:9-10).

Bearing the fruit of the Spirit is not the far-fetched illusion of some free thinker; it is within reach of every Christian. We are vessels through which God can display these glorious attributes if we will allow the Spirit to control our lives and produce through us what God intended.

## LOCATION AND DISPLAY OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9). This statement explains how the fruit of the Spirit is shown and manifested to the world through us. These three things—goodness, righteousness, and truth—become the windows through which others behold what the Spirit is producing in us. Fruit, produced by the Spirit, is encased in these three elements that God uses as a source of revelation. Through these the world beholds what God has done.




By these three avenues in life, we can manifest to others what God's Spirit can do. These three marketing agents show forth His glory; they are not to glorify us.

## ABIDING IN CHRIST IS ESSENTIAL TO FRUIT BEARING

Let us turn to John 15:1-16 and study carefully the teachings of our Lord on the topic of fruit bearing. From this passage we see the essentiality of abiding in Christ on a daily basis. Jesus described three levels of productivity in fruit bearing and explained how our productivity can increase:

1. Fruit
2. More Fruit
3. Much Fruit

**NOTES:**

A lack of fruit in our lives results in our being taken away and being cast into the fire (John 15:2, 6). Several questions come to mind after studying Jesus' teaching; He gives undeniable answers to each of them.

1. What is a branch in Jesus' teaching? Undoubtedly He referred to a born-again Christian. The only way to be in Christ is to be baptized into Him, to have His Spirit in us, and to walk with Him (John 3:1-8; Romans 6:3-4; 8:9-11).

2. How do we become branches in Christ? By being born again of the water and Spirit (John 3:1-8; Acts 2:1-4, 38).

3. How do we remain a branch? By remaining in Christ, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, and remaining unspotted by the world (II Corinthians 5:17-21; James 1:27).

4. How does a branch bear fruit? It is the Spirit that produces the fruit; therefore, without the Spirit we would be barren (Galatians 5:22-23; II Peter 1:5-10).

5. How is a branch removed from Christ? The individual does this by failing to keep God's Word (Luke 13:6-9; John 15:2, 6).

6. How do God and humans know we are not a branch? No fruit is produced, or else we produce bad fruit, thus telling the world and God what kind of tree we are (Matthew 7:16-20; James 3:10-13).

Gifts of the Spirit are given, while fruit of the Spirit is grown, or produced, in our lives. Fruit bearing should take place constantly and consistently in our lives.

In concluding this lesson, we should study two great scriptural truths about *barrenness*. It can be traced to one or both of the following:

1. In the parable of the sower, Jesus revealed why some never produce the fruit of the Spirit: they allow other things in life to take precedence over the Word of God (Matthew 13:1-23).

2. We must add seven virtues to our faith if we are to be productive and visionary (II Peter 1:5-8).

God will not tolerate a continual, constant state of barrenness. Babes in Christ pass through this stage only temporarily; then they are to go on to maturity. Let us accept the challenge of being productive and let the power of the Holy Spirit accomplish in our lives what the works of the flesh can never do.

**LESSON 34**

**NOTES:**

# GOVERNING ELEMENTS IN THE SAINT'S LIFE

## I CORINTHIANS 9:19-27

God has given us a method of checks and balances to keep us in the truth, now that we are saved. Our future success and salvation in the end hinge upon heeding God's spiritual and biblical controls. Since no one can make us submit, there must be a willingness and obedience on our part for God's methods to be effective. Unteachable, rebellious, stubborn, self-willed attitudes spell ultimate doom. Submissiveness for both minister and saint is essential to spiritual success.

Guidelines are essential for spiritual survival. We are not turned loose under grace to pursue our own whims and ways. Disciplines, controls, guidelines, teachers, and instructors are the order of God's kingdom. Authoritative figures are given to us to achieve balance, harmony, and growth. Parents, kings, governors, rulers, and masters all have a scriptural position and role to fill.

The constitutional structure of the United States calls for executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. As long as they work in their assigned roles and complement each other, they help to prevent imbalance and dictatorship. Similarly, following the principles of leadership in God's kingdom helps maintain harmony and balance.

God does not turn His people loose to conscience alone, or any one other factor. While He grants us liberty, He has also established restrictions for our protection. What determines our liberty? Who or what gives direction to us? How far can we go, and how much can we do? Who or what has authority to give guidelines for our lives?

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## WORD OF GOD

As a guide for our lives, the Bible is preeminent. God would be unknown to us, Calvary would only be known to its few personal witnesses, and the Holy Ghost would only be known to a few if it were not for the Word of God. No wonder David declared, "For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Psalm 138:2).

God's Word is the final authority by which we judge our lives, sermons, doctrines, organizational rules, spiritual gifts, and the will of God. Nothing bears rule and authority above the Word of God! It is the lone standard by which all else will be judged. Tradition pales and falls before the truth of Scripture. Thus we must make the Bible the focal point of our lives. The following passages demonstrate the value of God's Word:

1. All Scripture is inspired by God (II Timothy 3:16) and is profitable for:

   a. Doctrine
   b. Reproof

**NOTES:**

c. Correction
d. Instruction in righteousness

2. God's Word is like rain and snow coming down. It gives bread to the eater and seed to the sower (Isaiah 55:9-11).

3. Studying and rightly dividing the Word of God is a command to all (II Timothy 2:15).

4. God's Word was written for the following reasons, along with many more not mentioned here:

   a. That we might believe (John 20:31).
   b. That we may be admonished (I Corinthians 10:11).
   c. That we may know we have eternal life (I John 5:13).

We must never measure ourselves by someone else or some other rule or measuring device other than the Bible. (See lessons 10 and 11 for an in-depth discussion of the importance of the Word of God.)

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## THE MINISTRY

God has given the ministry of the church as a governing element and to help us understand the meaning of His Word (Nehemiah 8:8). From experience and the Bible, we understand the importance of the ministry having the oversight of the flock of God (Acts 20:28). Anytime a local church gets out of harmony with God's plan and allows deacons, elders, trustees, or anyone else to control the church, that local church is in for trouble. God's plan calls for the ministry to have this oversight, not as a dictatorial, tyrannical despot, but a God-fearing leader, dispensing spiritual food to the saint.

Where and what would our lives be like without the ministry, without a shepherd's heart guiding and leading us under the direction of God? The ministry is not the sole agency of protection in our lives, but it is an extremely important one.

God has given the fivefold ministry to the church (Ephesians 4:11-14). Look up the meaning of the following:

1. Apostles

2. Prophets

3. Evangelists

4. Pastors

5. Teachers

**NOTES:**

The primary task of the ministry is to equip the saints so that everyone will be able to work effectively in the church and thereby strengthen the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

Two areas of responsibility are vital to a healthy relationship between minister and church member. We cannot cover every detail here, but the following points will start us on the road to developing a proper relationship between minister and saint.

- **Our Responsibility to the Ministry.** We should:

  1. Remember those who have the rule over us (Hebrews 13:7).

  2. Esteem them very highly in love (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

  3. Obey those who have the rule over us (Hebrews 13:17).

  4. Count them worthy of double honor (I Timothy 5:17).

  5. Salute (greet with respect and kindness) those who have the rule over us (Hebrews 13:24).

  6. Do not muzzle them (I Timothy 5:18).

  7. Do not to receive an accusation against them except before two or three witnesses (I Timothy 5:19).

- **The Ministry's Responsibility to Us.** They should:

  1. Feed the flock of God (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4).

  2. Reprove and rebuke with all longsuffering (II Timothy 4:2).

  3. Preach the word (II Timothy 4:1-5).

  4. Make disciples, baptize, and teach them to observe all things the Lord has commanded (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:26-39).

  5. Command and teach what God's Word declares (I Timothy 4:11).

  6. Give direction for our lives, as Paul did to the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 5:11).

  7. Teach and exhort believers to obey God's commands (I Timothy 5:7; 6:2).

The Word of God is the measure or standard of both the minister and his or her message. All the factors we have presented in this study combine to preserve balance in the church and assure salvation for the believer.

**NOTES:**

## THE HOLY GHOST

God's Spirit is a powerful restraining and motivating force in us. How we need the governing of the Spirit to keep us in harmony with God's Word, as we listen to the still, small voice of the Spirit!

Sometimes the Spirit says, "Go," while at other times He may say, "Stop." Whatever God directs us to do or not to do, we must have a willing and ready mind to obey.

1. The Spirit forbade Paul to preach in Asia on a particular occasion (Acts 16:6-10).

2. The Holy Ghost directly teaches us some things (I Corinthians 2:13).

3. God's Spirit brings things to our remembrance while teaching us (John 14:26-27; 15:26; 16:7-14).

4. The grace of God that brings salvation also teaches us some essential things after we are saved (Titus 2:11-12).

5. We need to have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches (Revelation 3:22).

God's Spirit not only moves us but also governs us. The Spirit will never act in an unbecoming fashion, act contrary to the Scriptures, or motivate us to do anything disgraceful or reproachful to the name of Jesus.

We hear much about convictions, or what the Spirit convicts us to do or not do. This is well and good, but we need to remember some important guidelines in relation to convictions. Two vital areas are universal convictions and personal convictions.

- **Universal Convictions**

  These are universal truths and standards taught clearly in God's Word, and every believer must adhere to them. They are scriptural, the Holy Ghost wills them, they are a must, and we must align our feelings and purposes behind them. What the Bible teaches must become personal convictions of all of us; God does not grant liberty or latitude. These are God's minimums, His lowest standards, and His universal code to which all believers must adhere.

  The Spirit will empower us to live what the Word of God teaches. The Bible makes no unreasonable demands of us. The Holy Ghost will guide us and motivate us to love and to obey what the Word teaches.

- **Personal Convictions**

  By personal convictions we mean areas of individualized restrictions or liberties that we feel to do or not to do, areas in which we discern the personal

**NOTES:**

leading of the Holy Ghost. We may be convicted to do or not to do certain things. We should note the following guidelines in the area of personal convictions:

1. They never contradict, wrest, subtract, or add to the Scripture.

2. They are neither specifically approved of nor disapproved of by the Bible.

3. They are binding only on us; we must not impose them on others, although we may share them with others.

4. They will complement and enhance godliness in our individual lives; in this sense, they must be of God.

5. They are reasonable; we can live them by the help of God.

6. They are not taught as a requirement to be saved or as a Bible doctrine.

7. They are not to create an offense in us if others do not abide by them.

8. They are personal, private, individual points of dedication to God that we joyfully abide by for a deep, personal fulfillment and desire to please God.

We must remain sensitive to the moving of the Spirit. Our spirits are willing, but our flesh is weak. Our earthen vessels contain this treasure that is life's greatest possession. We must let the Spirit speak to us and be willing to obey His directives. God will never tell us anything through the Spirit that is contrary to His Word.

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## OUR BRETHREN

God's Word, the ministry, and the Holy Ghost serve as tremendous guidelines for us, but alongside them, God has placed our brethren as a governing element in our lives. God does not want us to do anything that would cause our brother in Christ to stumble or be offended. As a body, the church should have the same care of one member as it does others. Love calls for us to lay down our lives for the brethren (I John 3:16); therefore, we should be willing to restrict our appetites and activities to keep others from being offended.

God is displeased when we ignore others' feelings and place in the kingdom of God. To run roughshod through life, do what we want, buy what we want, and go where we want, with flagrant disregard for others, is displeasing to God.

Some appear to have little regard for cultural differences, background, localized problems, ethics, principles, and organizational rules of conduct. True Christianity walks softly so as not to create division, strife, disharmony, or offenses. To those who know the truth in its fullness, may God renew our regard and love for one another to the point

**NOTES:**

we can lay aside personal prejudices, opinions, and personal pursuits in order to enhance the peace and harmony of the church of the living God! Here are some guidelines for the proper exercise of our Christian liberty in a way that is sensitive to others.

1. We must give three considerations to others in the church. For the sake of our brothers and sisters, we should abstain from any practice that could cause the following (Romans 14:21-23):

   a. Fellow believers to stumble
   b. Fellow believers to be offended
   c. Fellow believers to be made weak

2. Paul's teaching about eating food offered to idols offers further insight into this area (I Corinthians 8:8-13).

3. Our liberty is judged by another person's conscience (I Corinthians 10:23-33).

4. Brotherly love is a much-needed addendum to our faith (II Peter 1:5-8).

We should value our brothers and sisters in the church in the same way we consider the members of our individual bodies. They deserve the highest honor and care we can give them.

Observing these guidelines will bring true happiness and balance to our Christian life. Error that springs from the human mind and spirit, along with the onslaught of false doctrines, will never destroy us if we will use these checks and balances.

Pruning, purging, realignment of priorities, and discipline of character and conduct are ongoing processes in the life of the true Christian. We grow, change, and mature as we journey toward our destiny. None of these agents hamper our progress but enhance our lives as we prepare for His soon return. It is hard to kick against the goads (Acts 9:5); submission is the best route.

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**NOTES**

**LESSON 35**

**NOTES:**

# CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

## I CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

Spiritual gifts, or the gifts of the Spirit, are an interesting and often misunderstood subject. God's Word is clear on their existence, use, and regulation. We should not ignore these gifts; neither should they create fear in us. We should study them carefully, seek after them, and allow them to operate in our lives for the glory of God.

Not one of the gifts of the Spirit belongs to the unbeliever. We must be filled with the Spirit in order to receive spiritual gifts. They are "children's bread" (Mark 7:27); they belong to the church. Therefore, the sinner or the person who is beginning to seek God does not have the promise of them. We are in gross error if we bypass the teaching of the Gospels, the experience and message of Acts, and skip over to I Corinthians 12-14 in order to seek after or lay claim to one or all of the nine spiritual gifts. We must rightly divide God's Word on this subject (II Timothy 2:15).

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## THE GIFTS CATEGORIZED

I Corinthians 12:8-10 lists nine spiritual gifts. We can divide them into three categories, bringing clarification and understanding to the gifts of the Spirit.

1. **Gifts of Revelation, or Power to Know**

   a. Word of knowledge
   b. Word of wisdom
   c. Discerning of spirits

2. **Gifts of Power, or Power to Act**

   a. Faith
   b. Gifts of healing
   c. Working of miracles

3. **Gifts of Inspiration, or Power to Speak**

   a. Prophecy
   b. Divers kinds of tongues
   c. Interpretation of tongues

**NOTES:**

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Below is a listing of the spiritual gifts with a brief definition of each, a few comments, and examples of each gift in operation. In some examples of operation, more than one gift was in operation. The definitions are based on *Dake's Annotated Bible,* with modifications to harmonize with Scripture.

- **Word of Knowledge**—is supernatural insight into the mind, will, and purpose of God and humans that would not be ordinarily known to us. Examples of this gift in operation are:

  1. God gave Peter knowledge of Ananias and Sapphira's plot (Acts 5:1-11).

  2. God gave Ananias a vision before he went to Saul (Acts 9:10-18).

  3. God gave Agabus knowledge of what awaited Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-13). Agabus then gave this knowledge as a prophecy.

The word of knowledge is a supernatural endowment of knowledge and is not associated with natural knowledge that results from intellectual pursuits. God makes something known to us outside the realm of study, what someone reveals to us, or what the Bible teaches.

We can and should have knowledge without this spiritual gift. Gaining an understanding of the Bible is not dependent upon this gift. We obtain knowledge of the Word through study and prayer.

- **Word of Wisdom**—is supernatural revelation or insight into the will or purpose of God accompanied by wisdom as to what to do or how to solve a problem. Examples of the operation of this gift are:

  1. God showed Paul how to solve the problem or meet the crisis of an impending shipwreck (Acts 27:1-44).

  2. God gave the Jerusalem Council needed wisdom for the problems at hand (Acts 15:1-22).

  3. The twelve apostles saw what to do in the conflict over equal distribution of goods among the people (Acts 6:1-8).

Through prayer we can receive wisdom from God for our daily life (James 1:5; 3:14-18). We can also acquire human, earthly wisdom through experience, encounters, and time. Neither of these is in view when the Bible speaks of the word of wisdom.

- **Discerning of Spirits**—is supernatural insight into the realm of spirits, whether they are of God or Satan, and the purpose involved. Examples of the operation of this gift are:

**NOTES:**

1. Paul exposed Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:4-13).

2. Paul discerned that a young girl was possessed with a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16-18).

3. The apostle Peter discerned the wrong spirit of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:14-25).

Many types of spirits exist in our world; therefore, we need this gift in operation today. We learn discernment in a general sense through time and experience, yet there are times when our spiritual safety depends on the gift of discerning of spirit for a special need or occasion. (See Ecclesiastes 3:10; Hebrews 5:14.)

We can discern many things through the Scriptures and by observing the actions and conduct of people. However, some things that appear to be right, sound, and of the truth are in reality works of Satan or wolves in sheep's clothing. In these situations, God can give us a supernatural means of determining what is the spirit of error versus the spirit of truth. (See I Timothy 4:1-5; I John 4:1-6.)

Our Lord knows what is in humans, and through this gift He is able to make it known to us. (1) He knows what is in people (John 2:23-25). (2) He perceives the thoughts of the hearts (Luke 9:47). (3) He searches the heart (Jeremiah 17:9-10). (4) He knows people's thoughts (Luke 6:8). Many and varied are the spirits in our day; therefore, we need to look to God for discernment.

- **Gifts of Healing**—are supernatural healings of people for whom we pray—without human aid or medicine. Examples of this gift in operation are:

  1. Healing of Publius (Acts 28:8-9).

  2. Healing of the lame man at the Beautiful gate (Acts 3:1-16).

  3. Healing of the lame and paralyzed at Samaria (Acts 8:6-8).

Every living organism has an inherent healing power within it—the ability to repair itself in the event of sickness, accident, and disease. Healing processes occur in the lives of people when they are sick, have surgery, or have accidents. However, this natural healing is not the supernatural gift of healing.

Healing is a constant and abiding promise of God available to every believer (Mark 16:14-20; James 5:13-15). In I Corinthians 12, the gifts of healing are specific instances in which an extraordinary display of God's healing power operates through a believer as he or she prays for someone in need.

All supernatural healings are miracles, but not all miracles are healings. Other miracles in the New Testament included calming a storm, raising the dead, and opening prison doors. The healing of the lame man in Acts 3:1-16 is called both a "notable miracle" and a "miracle of healing" (Acts 4:16, 22).

**NOTES:**

Medical science and doctors, although they do a great work, are not an extension of Christ's healing ministry; nor is their work associated with the Bible record and method of healing. We should keep the work of humans and the work of God in their proper perspective, lest we take glory from God and give it to people.

- **Working of Miracles**—is a supernatural work performed through a child of God that transcends the laws of nature and human ability. Examples of this gift in operation are:

  1. Peter was delivered from prison (Acts 12:1-19).

  2. Eutychus was restored to life (Acts 20:7-12).

  3. The miracles in Acts 8:6-13, Hebrews 2:4, and Galatians 3:5 could have been miracles of healing or notable miracles outside the realm of healing.

*Miracle* is a word that society uses lightly, as people express amazement over new inventions, medical science, and architectural marvels. Although these things may be great and outstanding, they still remain the works of humans. We would give more glory to God and keep this word in better context if we used it exclusively for the supernatural work of the Spirit. Surely we should describe a supernatural healing or an event that supersedes the course of nature as a miracle, giving all glory to God.

- **Faith**—is the supernatural ability to believe God for a special need without human doubt, unbelief, or reasoning. Examples of the operation of this gift are:

  1. Paul spoke of faith to remove mountains (I Corinthians 13:2).

  2. Peter and John had faith for the lame man (Acts 3:1-16).

  3. The prayer of faith in James 5:15 could, at times, include the gift of faith, although in the general sense it may not.

  The gift of faith could also have operated in the following instances, along with many others:

  1. Peter's deliverance from prison (Acts 12:1-19).

  2. The resurrection of Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12).

  3. Miracles at Samaria (Acts 8:6-13).

Faith is essential in obtaining and allowing the spiritual gifts to operate in our lives. No doubt the gift of faith is often coupled with other spiritual gifts, such as the gifts of healing or the working of miracles, to bring them to fruition. In I Corinthians 12, the gift of faith is a special, extraordinary measure of faith from God for a special occasion. After the special need has been met, we then walk by faith in everyday life.

**NOTES:**

Outside the spiritual gift of faith, all believers have faith as an abiding entity in the heart, and it produces great results in their lives and in the lives of others. In the Christian life, we are to add to our faith (II Peter 1:5-10), use the shield of faith as a part of our armor (Ephesians 6:16), and let the Spirit produce the fruit of faith in our lives (Galatians 5:22). (See lesson 2 for further discussion of faith in the daily life of a Christian.)

- **Prophecy**—is a supernaturally inspired utterance in our native language for the purpose of edification, exhortation, and comfort. Examples of the operation of this gift are:

  1. Agabus prophesied of a drought (Acts 11:27-30).

  2. Philip's four daughters prophesied (Acts 21:8-9).

  3. Paul told of some future things awaiting the church (Acts 20:28-38).

I Corinthians 14 provides further instruction concerning this gift. That chapter regulates all three vocal gifts as to the number of use in a single service. No more than three prophecies should be given in any one public service. God's purpose for this guideline is to preserve the order of the service, so that all things may be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40).

Exercising the gift of prophecy does not make someone a prophet in the sense of Ephesians 4:11, which refers to a ministerial office.

- **Divers Kinds of Tongues**—is a supernaturally inspired utterance in another language not known by the speaker. (See lesson 6 for further discussion of this subject.) Examples of this gift in operation are:

  1. I Corinthians 12:10

  2. I Corinthians 13:1

  3. I Corinthians 14:1-40

- **Interpretation of Tongues**—is the supernatural ability to interpret into the native language a message given in other tongues. The other tongue is known neither by the congregation as a whole nor by the one who interprets. (See lesson 6 for further discussion of this subject.)

In themselves, the gifts of the Spirit are not conclusive evidence that a person is living in the Spirit; the fruit of the Spirit are much more significant in that regard. Gifts of the Spirit are a divine gratuity, a spiritual endowment, and a miraculous operation in our lives that we cannot acquire through human ingenuity. Gifts are given to us, while fruit grows.

The Bible mentions three distinct types or categories of gifts. Studying each of them brings a blessing.

**NOTES:**

1. The Holy Ghost is a gift from God (Acts 2:38; 11:17; Romans 6:23).

2. The ministry is a gift from God to the church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

3. The nine spiritual gifts are gifts from God that work through individuals (I Corinthians 12:1-13).

Abiding in the daily life of the Christian are wisdom, knowledge, faith, and healing. These spiritual acquisitions are ours to claim continually. We can receive additional strength in each of these areas through exercise of the spiritual gifts on special occasions. We should earnestly desire and pray for spiritual gifts in our lives and in our congregations. They are available to minister and saint alike, and through their use, the body of Christ will be exhorted, edified, and comforted.

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**NOTES**

**LESSON 36**

**NOTES:**

# COMMUNION AND FOOTWASHING

## MATTHEW 26:26-29; I CORINTHIANS 11:1-2, 23-24; JOHN 13:1-17

Two of the cardinal teachings of God's Word that deserve our close scrutiny and investigation are communion and footwashing. Since these subjects are extensive, it is important to study the Scripture references carefully. We will examine communion in the first part of the lesson, footwashing in the second.

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## COMMUNION

Since this subject has its roots in the Old Testament, we will go there first.

- **A type**—is a person, thing, or event that represents or symbolizes another that is to come.

- **An antitype**—is the person or thing represented or foreshadowed by an earlier type or symbol.

The Passover is a type of the death of Christ, which is the antitype. Since the communion service commemorates the death of Christ, we can also view it as an antitype of the Passover.

- **The Passover**—Before we delve into the details of this subject, carefully read Exodus 12:1-28, 40-51; 13:3-10; Numbers 9:1-14; Deuteronomy 16:1-8.

  Israel had been in Egyptian bondage for 430 years. God heard their cries for deliverance, so He sent Moses to Egypt and empowered him to lead the Israelites out of slavery. God worked many notable miracles through Moses, plaguing the Egyptians and defeating the Egyptian gods. As God prepared to unleash the last plague on Egypt—a death angel would go through Egypt killing the firstborn of every family—He commanded the Israelites to apply the blood of a lamb to the lintel and doorposts of their homes to escape the plague. When the death angel saw the blood, he would pass over that home. God commanded Israel to keep the first Feast of Passover to escape the plague and to keep later Passover Feasts as a memorial of God's delivering them. Below are the major points and details that Israel was to carry out to keep the Passover Feast.

1. **The Lamb**

   a. Had to be fastened up from the tenth to the fourteenth of the month.

**NOTES:**

b. Had to be without blemish.

c. Had to be a male of the first year.

d. Had to be a sheep or goat.

e. Had to be roasted; could not be eaten raw or boiled.

f. Had to be eaten in entirety along with bitter herbs.

g. Had to be kept whole; not a bone of the lamb could be broken.

2. **The Individual**

a. If a household was too small to eat an entire lamb, they were to invite their neighbors to help them eat all the lamb.

b. They were to apply the blood from the lamb to the lintel (above the door) and on the two side posts of the door, but never on the threshold.

c. The Israelites were to be dressed for travel when they ate the Passover lamb. They were to eat it in haste with their loins girded, shoes on, and staff in hand.

d. They were to put out all leaven from their houses; they were to eat unleavened bread for seven days after the Passover.

e. The Israelites were not to work on the day of the Passover.

3. **The Ordinance of the Passover**

a. Passover was to be observed in the month *Nisan* or *Abib* (these are one and the same).

b. Strangers, those who were not Israelites, could not eat the Passover.

c. Servants or slaves could eat the Passover if they had been circumcised.

d. The Passover Feast had to be eaten in one house; it could not be carried out of the house or from place to place.

e. Strangers could eat the Passover if the males submitted to circumcision. They were known as Jewish proselytes.

f. One law was applicable to all, both to home born and to strangers if they were to eat the Passover.

**NOTES:**

g. All who were clean (not defiled through violation of the law) and not on a journey had to eat the Passover, or they would be cut off from the people. Failing to observe the Passover was a sin (Numbers 9:13).

h. The usual day for observing the Passover was the fourteenth day of *Nisan* or *Abib*, the first month of the Jewish year. A person who was defiled or on a journey at this time was to observe the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month, *Iyyar* or *Ziv* (Numbers 9:9-11).

i. Israel was to observe the Passover in the place where God placed His name (Deuteronomy 16:5-6).

Since these things typify the atoning death of Christ and the communion service in the New Testament, they are significant to the church today. Understanding the communion service is contingent upon understanding the Passover.

The Bible contains ten specific accounts of the celebration of the Passover. Many other Passovers were observed, but we have only these ten accounts:

1. The original Passover (Exodus 12:1-28).
2. The Passover in the wilderness (Numbers 9:5).
3. The first Passover in Canaan (Joshua 5:10).
4. The Passover under Hezekiah (II Chronicles 30:13-15).
5. The Passover under Josiah (II Kings 23:21-23; II Chronicles 35:1-19).
6. The Passover under Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:16-22).
7. The Passover Jesus attended as a boy (Luke 2:41).
8. The first Passover during Jesus' ministry (John 2:13-25).
9. The second Passover during Jesus' ministry (John 6:4).
10. The last Passover during Jesus' ministry (Matthew 26:17). He instituted the communion service at this time.

Abraham's meeting with Melchisedec, where Abraham was served bread and wine, is also a beautiful type of the communion service (Genesis 14:18-20). Christ's priesthood was after the order of Melchisedec rather than after the order of Aaron (Hebrews 7:1-28).

Let us now turn to the New Testament communion service, or the Lord's Supper.

**NOTES:**

- **The Communion Service**—Before delving into this study, carefully read the following passages: Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20; John 6:51-56; I Corinthians 5:6-8; 10:16-21; 11:1-2, 23-34. "The Lord's Supper," eating at "the Lord's table," and "the Eucharist" are also terms for the communion service.

  Numerous questions and ideas are raised in connection with this service. To discuss them fairly, let us examine a few of the more commonly asked questions, letting the Bible provide the answers. These points are the antitype of the types provided in the Passover.

1. **What should we use to represent the body of Jesus Christ in the communion service?** During the Passover the Israelites removed all leaven and leavened bread from their houses. When Jesus broke bread in Matthew 26:26-29 and stated, "This is my body," He was using unleavened bread.

   We should bake bread, using plain flour and water, or buy unleavened bread prepared for the communion service. Before the unleavened bread is served, the pastor, or someone he designates, should give thanks and bless the bread, setting it apart as a *representative* of the body of Jesus Christ that was broken for us.

   Transubstantiation, a doctrine officially adopted by Pope Innocent III at the Lateran Council in A.D. 1215, states that the bread and fruit of the vine, when blessed by the priest, becomes the actual, physical body and blood of Jesus Christ. This idea is unscriptural. Unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine are representatives of the body and blood of Jesus but not His actual body and blood.

2. **What is leaven?** Leaven is yeast or sourdough. The verb *leaven* means to raise or seethe with fermentation. Leaven is the substance in bread that makes it rise, puff, and stand up. The Israelites were to remove all leaven from their houses during the Passover and for seven days afterward. The seven days following the Passover were known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

   Leaven is a type of sin, false doctrine, or error, representing things that puff up, exalt, and bring pride, as we see from the following references.

   a. Jesus warned his disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:6, 11-12).

   b. Jesus warned his disciples of the leaven of Herod (Mark 8:15).

   c. Paul warned us of the leaven of malice and wickedness (I Corinthians 5:6-8).

   d. Paul warned us that a little leaven leavens the whole lump (Galatians 5:9).

**NOTES:**

e. We must purge all spiritual leaven from our personal lives in order for us to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (I Corinthians 5:6-8).

No sin (leaven) was in the life of Jesus Christ, and to represent His body correctly, we must use unleavened bread (II Corinthians 5:21).

3. **What should we use to represent the blood of Jesus Christ?** There are two opinions: One is that we should use unfermented grape juice, and the other is that we should use fermented wine. Believers should follow the teaching of their pastor and practice of their local assembly.

   Using either wine or grape juice as a representative of the blood of Jesus Christ is not a matter of salvation; either is acceptable. We should not, however, use tomato juice, watermelon juice, or the like, just because they come from a vine. Colas, apple juice, cranberry juice, and other beverages are not acceptable representatives of the blood of Christ either. The symbol requires the use of the grape, as in the Scriptures.

   Whether we use grape juice or wine to represent Christ's blood, the most important thing is that we have a right attitude and spirit. We should be so awed and overwhelmed that Christ would shed His blood for us that we cannot be contentious, offended, or driven away during such a holy moment. We should long to remember His broken body and shed blood, and we can do so most perfectly in communion.

   The pastor, or someone he designates, should bless the fruit of the vine as the representative of the blood of Christ. All who partake should do so in holy reverence, giving praise and honor to Christ for shedding His blood for us.

4. **How often should I take communion?** God's Word does not specifically say how frequently we should celebrate communion. Paul stated that as often as we take communion we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (I Corinthians 11:26). Since Israel observed the Passover once a year, we should celebrate communion at least once a year; this is a minimum. Observing communion as often as the pastor calls for it does not violate the Scripture. However, we should never allow communion to become commonplace or taken lightly, regardless of how often we take it.

5. **Is taking communion part of our salvation?** Jews who were undefiled or not on a journey sinned and were cut off from Israel if they failed to observe the Passover (Numbers 9:13; John 6:48-58). While communion is not part of the new birth, it is part of our life of obedient faith, and in this sense it is part of our salvation. Of course, it is possible that a new convert would die before taking his or her first communion, or that the Lord would rapture the church first. But outside of such circumstances, all saints should want to take part in communion and thereby remember the Lord's broken body and shed blood.

**NOTES:**

By all means, we should make it a point to be at church for communion. When this is impossible, we can take it later or wherever we may be while away from our home church. If someone is defiled spiritually with sin in his or her life, he or she must repent before the communion service.

6. **What is meant by "Christ our Passover?"** Jesus Christ is the antitype of the Passover lamb (I Corinthians 5:6-8). He was sacrificed for us as a lamb without spot or blemish (II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 1:18-19; Hebrews 9:12-14). His blood has been applied to our lives through our obedience to the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4). (See John 3:1-8; Acts 2:1-4, 38.)

   Blood from the Passover lamb was never placed on the threshold (where people stepped) of the door, only on the top and sides. We should highly esteem Christ's blood and never tread it underfoot (Hebrews 6:1-6; 10:28-29). Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

7. **What two views do we receive in the communion service?** When we partake of communion we look in two directions simultaneously (I Corinthians 11:26).

   a. We look backward to His death at Calvary with respect, awe, humility, thanksgiving, and love. We "shew the Lord's death," meaning we proclaim, declare, preach, speak of, teach and promulgate it. The way to show the Lord's death is by taking communion.

   b. We look ahead to the coming of the Lord. Paul taught that we show His death "till he come." Every communion service is a declaration that we believe in and expect the coming of the Lord.

8. **What is meant by taking communion "unworthily"?** I Corinthians 11:27 warns us against taking the Lord's Supper unworthily. We should note that it does not say "unworthy." *Unworthy* is an adjective, meaning without merit or value, worthless, and not deserving. *Unworthily* is an adverb, meaning irreverently, unfit, or in an unworthy manner. *Unworthy* is a condition; *unworthily* is a manner. They are two entirely different words. None of us feel worthy to partake of His body and blood, but He has made us worthy through salvation. *Unworthily* has to do with the manner, spirit, conduct, and attitude in which we take communion.

9. **What is meant by, "Let a man examine himself"? (I Corinthians 11:28).** The Passover lamb was fastened up four days to examine it for spots and blemishes, and during this time the individual made himself ready for the Passover by ridding his house of leaven.

   Similarly, self-examination is a must before we engage in communion. (See Psalm 26:2; II Corinthians 13:5.) Our hearts should be free of condemnation, guilt, and sin when we take communion. Preceding this service we should spend time in prayer, soul searching, humiliation, and possibly fasting.

**NOTES:**

I Corinthians 11:28-32 presents three reasons why we should examine ourselves:

a. To prevent us from eating and drinking unworthily.

b. To prevent us from being weak, sickly, or dying. These three words have both physical and spiritual implications.

c. To prevent us from being judged with the world. Instead, we are to judge ourselves, which means to separate thoroughly, to withdraw from, to discriminate, and to discern. "Judged" here means punished, avenged, condemned, decreed, or sentenced.

Self-examination before communion is a scriptural requirement for each of us.

10. **What is meant by, "A bone of him shall not be broken"? (John 19:36).** When the Passover lamb was sacrificed, there was one special requirement: "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof" (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12). This lamb was a type of Christ our Passover lamb (I Corinthians 5:6-8), and it was prophesied that not a bone of Him was to be broken (Psalm 34:20).

    According to Roman practice, when someone was crucified his legs were broken to hasten his death. When the soldiers came to Jesus while He was hanging on the cross, He was already dead. Therefore, instead of breaking His legs, they pierced His side, thus fulfilling prophecy (Zechariah 12:10). Not a bone of Him was broken as had been prophesied; Jesus became the perfect antitype of the Passover lamb (John 19:31-37).

    We would do well to fulfill this type by not breaking the Word of the Lord. We are to rightly divide it and obey it, but not break the bones.

11. **What is meant by, "Discerning the Lord's body"? (I Corinthians 11:29).** The Bible uses the word *body* in several ways:

    a. Our physical human bodies (Romans 12:1).

    b. The physical body of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 11:29).

    c. The church, which the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18).

    I Corinthians 11:29 does not refer to the church as the body of Christ. This statement appears in context of the communion service, when we remember the broken body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose of communion is to remember the body broken and the blood shed at Calvary, not the church. The church was not broken, nor was its blood shed for us. This passage could only refer to the physical body of Christ in light of the following: (1) In His own body, He bore our sins (I Peter 2:24). (2) "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Hebrews 10:5). (3) In Isaiah 53,

**NOTES:**

Christ is the suffering sacrifice, wounded, bruised, and beaten; this was accomplished in His body. (4) In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). (5) We are dead to the law by the body of Christ (Romans 7:4). (6) He has reconciled us in the body of His flesh through death (Colossians 1:21-22). (7) Jesus declared, "This is my body which is given for you" (Luke 22:19-20).

12. **"If any man hunger, let him eat at home" (I Corinthians 11:34).** Earlier the passage asks, "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" (I Corinthians 11:22). Apparently the Corinthian church brought individual and family meals and ate them in the church in observance of communion. Division and disharmony resulted because the rich had plenty, and were even getting drunk, while the poor were ignored.

    No communion service was ever intended to be a full-fledged meal such as we eat at home. Such eating would be irreverent and unacceptable as a memorial to the Lord's death. We should take only a small piece of unleavened bread and a small portion of the fruit of the vine. We eat the unleavened bread first and then drink the fruit of the vine immediately afterward. Any meal should be eaten separate from the communion service, making a clear distinction between the two.

    Some have interpreted this passage to mean that it is a sin to eat a meal in a family center or fellowship hall connected to the church building, but that is not what the Scripture says. As a matter of respect for worship, we should not eat or drink any type of food or beverages in the church sanctuary at any time. But meals served in a properly designated place are acceptable and do not violate Scripture. Jesus' driving the moneychangers from the Temple does not fit in this context (John 2:13-17). In that situation, He drove out dishonest men who were exchanging currencies at an unfair rate when selling sacrifices. We should always respect God's house, and we should take communion in the right spirit, not with banqueting or boisterousness.

Israel was to observe the Passover as a memorial throughout all generations and to keep it as an ordinance forever (Exodus 12:14-17). Paul referred to ordinances (precept, tradition, direction or command of an authoritative nature, or an established religious rite) and admonished the church to keep them (I Corinthians 11:2). I Corinthians 11 deals with two specific ordinances, namely, hair and the communion service.

God's ordinance of the Passover continues in the New Testament era of grace through the communion service. The church is to observe this service until the Lord returns (I Corinthians 11:26). May we never forget the communion of the body and blood of Christ, remembering that "we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Corinthians 10:16-17).

**NOTES:**

## FOOTWASHING

Christendom as a whole has abandoned or ignored the biblical truth of washing the saints' feet. Study John 13:1-17 and I Timothy 5:9-10 for the scriptural teaching on this subject.

From these passages, it is clear that washing the saints' feet is an essential New Testament teaching for the church today. Immediately after our Lord instituted the communion service, He instituted footwashing as an ordinance for the New Testament church. Communion without washing feet is not wrong, but footwashing should follow communion services when possible, with all the saints and ministers participating. At the minimum, we should observe a service of communion and footwashing at least once a year.

At the conclusion of the communion service, the men should separate from the ladies. Men should then wash men's feet, with ladies washing ladies' feet. Footwashing should be observed by washing both feet of at least one person, splashing clear water on the person's feet and then drying them with a towel.

While washing our fellow saint's feet, we should be in a prayerful spirit, rejoicing that we are doing what Jesus did for His disciples. While our feet are being washed, we should pray for the one washing our feet, asking God to bless and honor him for his humility. Each person should wash someone else's feet and have his feet washed if he is physically able.

We should not practice selectivity at this time. Some who are present may be of another race, poor, underprivileged, or even a little dirty and unkempt, but we should not shun them or refuse to wash their feet. Jesus no doubt washed Judas's feet only hours before he betrayed Him into the hands of sinners. Footwashing services should break down pride, barriers, feelings, and resentments that may exist in our hearts. Let us discuss some important truths from the Scripture relative to foot washing.

1. **"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8).** Jesus said this to Peter, who was questioning Jesus' action. Could not this declaration be true for us, just as well as it was for Peter, if we deliberately refuse to obey the Lord? We need to drop the practice of footwashing if it is not important, biblical, or essential. But if footwashing is important, biblical, or essential, then believers should practice it until Jesus comes. When we wash someone's feet, we establish a point of identity with Christ that does not take place any other way.

2. **"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet" (John 13:10).** When Jesus warned Peter that he would have no part with Him if He did not wash his feet, Peter then wanted Jesus to wash his hands and head also. Jesus replied that when we are washed there is no need for additional washing outside having our feet washed.

   a. *Washed* comes from the Greek word *louo,* which means to bathe the whole person. Here it refers to our salvation from sin. When we are born again, in

**NOTES:**

the eyes of God we are washed. (See I Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22; II Peter 2:22; Revelation 1:5.)

b. *Wash* comes from the Greek word *nipto*, which means to cleanse, especially the hands, head, feet; or to wet a part only.

c. *Save* comes from a Greek word meaning except, rather.

After we are born again, we do not go through the new birth or full spiritual washing all over again. However, we still need to stay clean from spiritual defilement in our daily walk with God. When we wash one another's feet, we demonstrate an attitude of humility and service, which is an important part of being spiritually clean. In addition, a cleansing of attitude occurs when we wash one another's feet.

3. **"I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).** Jesus declared that His washing the disciple's feet was an exemplary act for us to follow. Since Christ washed His disciple's feet, how can we do any less than wash His present-day disciples' feet? What an example! If we truly want to be like Jesus, here is a classic example for us to follow.

4. **"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).** Happiness is a by-product of other things; it is not self-perpetuating. Washing the saints' feet produces happiness in the believer's life because (1) we demonstrate that we have a part with Him, (2) we are seeking to remain spiritually clean, (3) we have followed Jesus' example, and (4) we have obeyed the Word of God.

5. **What was Paul's teaching concerning the church's assistance of widows?** Along with several other requirements, Paul taught that a widow is eligible for assistance from the church "if she ha[s] washed the saints' feet" (I Timothy 5:3-10). Paul did not indicate that only widows should wash the saints' feet, but that widows would not be eligible for assistance from the church if they had not done this. Footwashing must have been important to receive this kind of emphasis.

Footwashing is biblical, essential, and a blessing to the church. Let us participate in it with humility and joy. Communion draws us close to God, and footwashing draws us close to one another.

**NOTES**

**LESSON 37**

**NOTES:**

# LAYING ON OF HANDS

## HEBREWS 6:1-2

Note: According to Hebrews 6:1-2, the laying on of hands is one of the six *principles of the doctrine of Christ*. We will study the others in later lessons.

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We hear very little in our day about the doctrine of the laying on of hands. Although it is not as popular as some other topics, it does find a place among the principles of the doctrines of Christ. Our Lord in His earthly ministry gave it high rank in His practice.

Since this passage of Holy Writ records only six of these principles, and laying on of hands is one of them, we should investigate it carefully. Jesus taught many wonderful truths, each being of vital importance. But this topic is so important that it is part of the foundation (Hebrews 6:1). We must dig deep and build on Christ, the Rock, in order to have a secure Christian life. Foundation work goes slowly and does not make a fast showing, so we are inclined to rush on to other things we consider to be of finer quality; but if we do, we suffer and regret our decision in the end.

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## SIGNIFICANCE OF HANDS IN THE BIBLE

As instruments of use and service to ourselves, others, and God, our hands are some of the more important members of the body. The Scriptures refer to hands numerous times—our physical hands, the spiritual connotation of hands, and the hand of God, meaning His work among humans. (See Job 2:10; Jeremiah 1:9; Acts 11:21; Revelation 1:16-20.)

Scriptural references to the right hand of God do not indicate location, but speak of a place of favor, authority, relationship, and power. (See Psalm 16:11; 110:1; 118:15-16; 138:7; Luke 22:69; Hebrews 8:1; 9:24; 10:12; 12:2; I Peter 3:22.) The laying on of hands as a fundamental doctrine represents the spiritual work of impartation, conferral, transfer, conveyance, transmission, and confirmation.

Divine impartations are not executed at the will and whim of humans. The one laying on hands and the one on whom hands are laid must be in harmony, full of faith, and in accordance with God's will and Word before they can obtain the desired results. God acts sovereignly and independently of the act of laying on of hands, but He does use this means to perform many of His great works. It is important to conduct this practice biblically. Godly discretion is also a must in every occasion where hands are laid upon someone.

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## LAYING ON OF HANDS

We will discuss five basic areas in which the laying on of hands is used. Other areas may emerge through further study, but these are the basic ones of Scripture:

- **Blessing**—A tremendous impact can be made in an individual's life when a minister or saint of God lays hands on someone, invoking the blessing of God upon his life. Age is no barrier for being used of God in this manner or in receiving a blessing in this manner.

  1. Jesus laid His hands on children and blessed them (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16). Children need the blessings of God invoked upon them in this manner by their parents, the saints, and the ministry.

  2. In blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob crossed his hands and blessed these sons of Joseph, imparting to them the birthright (Genesis 48:14-16). Similarly, Isaac blessed Jacob when he received the birthright (Genesis 27:18-29).

Faith was an active force in both of these instances (Hebrews 11:20-21). Faith should always be in our heart when we lay hands on someone in prayer, asking God to bless him or her. Our requests for a child or an adult must be reasonable and biblical for them to be effective.

- **Leadership**—When people assume leadership positions, especially when they succeed someone else, it is essential for them to have the hand of God upon them along with the approval of people. Laying on of hands, by those in authority on those who are entering positions of leadership, brings blessing, guidance, and leadership from almighty God to their lives.

  1. Joshua, in succeeding Moses, had hands laid upon him (Numbers 27:18-23; Deuteronomy 34:9).

  2. Levi and his descendants were specifically chosen of God, but they were brought before Israel, and all the people laid their hands upon them (Numbers 8:1-22). It was a gesture of support, goodwill, and submission on Israel's part, giving these men confidence to do their job, as they knew the people were supporting them.

  3. When the church sent Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey, the hands of the teachers and prophets, and possibly the congregation, were laid on them (Acts 13:1-4).

  4. Seven men were chosen to serve tables in the early church so the apostles could give themselves to prayer and the Word (Acts 6:1-7). Hands were laid on them as they were thrust into this responsible position of leadership.

Every capacity of leadership from the smallest to the greatest needs the approval, authority, and blessing of God, along with that of the men and women one is called upon

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to lead. When a local church, state, national, or international organization places people in leadership roles, it is scriptural for the pastor, ministers, or saints if called on to do so, to lay hands on the chosen leader. After this, they have the dual ordination of God and humans upon them; and as long as their life is pure and their efforts are their best, the people should support them in prayer, finance, and other means.

- **Receiving the Holy Ghost**—Faith in God, repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost are essential elements of the new birth. People can receive the Holy Ghost prior to being baptized but must then submit to water baptism (Acts 10:44-48). God also gives people the Holy Ghost when hands are laid upon them, but it is not essential for hands to be laid upon them in order to receive the Spirit of God. Someone who has the Holy Spirit cannot simply confer it upon someone who does not have this gift. God baptizes with the Spirit (Acts 1:5), and He can do so whether hands are laid upon the candidate or not. Since He gives the Holy Ghost, He deserves all glory when someone is filled with the Spirit. Laying hands on people and asking God to give them the Holy Ghost is right and scriptural. It can be a great help in encouraging the seeker to have faith to receive. Ultimately, however, we must leave the matter to God. (See lesson 5 for an in-depth study on the Holy Ghost.)

  1. Peter and John went to Samaria, where Philip had been preaching and baptizing the Samaritans in the name of Jesus. They had not received the Holy Ghost before this time, but when the apostles laid hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-25).

  2. Ananias went to Saul (Paul) and laid his hands on him to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17-18).

  3. At Ephesus, Paul laid his hands on those who knew only the baptism of John the Baptist, and they received the Holy Ghost, speaking with tongues (Acts 19:1-6).

- **Healing**—The Bible contains many references to healing through the laying on of hands. God does the healing; it is not the power or holiness of the one laying on hands that brings healing (Acts 3:12-16). God can and does heal without hands being laid on the sick, but God does use this method and even commands believers to use it, as we will see in this lesson.

We need to address two important matters in this study for clarity, to remain scriptural, and to avoid confusion.

1. **Laying on of Hands by Believers**—All saints are allowed to lay hands on the sick, asking God to heal them (Mark 16:18). The laity should not anoint with oil; this is reserved for the ministry, or those appointed by the ministry.

2. **Laying on of Hands by the Ministry**—Ministers are to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord, asking God to heal the sick. They may also lay hands

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on someone without anointing him with oil, asking God to heal him. There are no healing properties in the oil; healing comes from Jesus Christ. Anointing with oil is an act of faith and obedience to God's Word.

Numerous passages shed additional light on this subject. (1) Believers are to lay hands on the sick (Mark 16:18). (2) Ministers are to anoint with oil (James 5:14-15). (3) Jesus healed the multitudes (Luke 4:40-41). (4) Jesus laid hands on a woman with a spirit of infirmity and healed her (Luke 13:11-13). (5) Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law by touching her (Matthew 8:14-15). (6) Peter took a lame man by the hand, and he was healed (Acts 3:1-16). (7) Jesus healed some in Nazareth by the laying on of hands, but unbelief hindered Him (Mark 6:5-6). (8) Jesus healed a blind man by laying hands on him twice (Mark 8:22-26). (9) God performed special miracles by the hands of Paul (Acts 19:11-12). (10) Publius was healed with the laying on of hands (Acts 28:8). (11) Christ healed the leper with a touch (Matthew 8:1-3).

In each of these, hands were used as channels through which God brought healings. May we in our day of abounding sickness and disease consecrate ourselves to His service and become a channel through which He can touch others.

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## THE MINISTRY

This section is for those entering the ministry and being ordained by other ministers. Any prospective minister should study this section carefully and understand it clearly.

1. **Timothy**—was a young minister whom Paul reminded of his responsibility to keep the fire of God afresh in his life and ministry. Apparently a prophecy had been made concerning Timothy, and Paul refreshed his mind concerning it and encouraged him not to fail (I Timothy 1:18; 4:14). The elders had laid hands on him, ordaining him into the ministry; therefore, Timothy had a solemn charge to keep (II Timothy 4:1-4).

2. **Paul and Barnabas**—Not only did the Holy Ghost speak to these men, but hands were laid upon them before they went forth (Acts 13:1-4).

Those entering the ministry should keep in mind the need of a dual ordination: first of God, then of humans. Without proving ourselves faithful before people and obtaining their favor, charge, and blessing, our ministry will accomplish little, if anything.

Responsibility rests upon those who lay their hands on others for whatever cause. Since by doing so we thrust ourselves into this position under the leadership of God, as His Word gives us authority, we need to consider several factors.

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## ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY

By laying hands upon someone else for whatever reason (this act is not forced upon us), we assume certain personal responsibilities in the matter. Before we accept the position of doing what God allows humans to do in this area, we need to weigh some things from a scriptural perspective. Let us accept these challenges of personal commitment and allow ourselves to be used of God, whether we are a minister or saint.

1. **Right Living**—Living a holy and godly life in accordance with the teaching of God's Word and being in good standing in our local assembly is necessary before we lay hands on someone else.

   a. Sceva's seven sons assumed the responsibility of casting out Satan when they were in no position to do so (Acts 19:11-17).

   b. Simon was not right with God but wanted the privilege to lay hands on others for them to receive the Holy Ghost; Peter rebuked him for this (Acts 8:14-23).

   c. Before we can give we must receive. Peter and John had something to give before they took the lame man by the hand and raised him up (Acts 3:1-16).

2. **Right Motives**—Our motive must be right in laying our hands on someone else, asking God to help him or her. Glory and honor belong to God; we must never accept glory when God uses us in the laying on of hands.

Humility must be the hallmark of those whom God uses, as we see from Peter and John's attitude in Acts 3:12, 16. Being showy, calling attention to self, or accepting praise or honor should be far from us. We are only vessels of clay through which God chooses to work; we must give Him all glory and honor.

3. **Faith Is Required**—When laying hands on someone and asking God to perform something in his or her life, we must exercise faith for what we are asking. We must believe that God is going to do what we ask Him to do.

   a. Faith in the name of Jesus Christ healed the lame man (Acts 3:1-16).

   b. Isaac and Jacob had faith when they laid hands on others (Hebrews 11:20-21).

   c. It is the prayer of faith that saves the sick (James 5:14-15).

4. **Lay Hands Suddenly on No One**—Paul warned Timothy not to be hasty in ordaining others into the ministry or in placing them in places of responsibility or leadership (I Timothy 5:17-22). (See also II John 7-11).

A good rule to follow concerning the laying on of hands is to be careful, cautious, and biblical in the truest sense of the word. Capriciously laying hands on anyone without

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thought, reason, or purpose behind it, lessens its importance and sacredness. We are working with a principle of the doctrine of Christ, not a playful antic of showmanship.

5. **Discretion**—All who lay hands on others must show consideration, caution, and thoughtfulness for the people they pray for. Here are some guidelines.

   a. Do not handle a person roughly, especially someone praying in the altar or one who is sick. Conduct of this type is more distracting than beneficial. Rough handling does not bring more power from God; it only attracts undue attention.

   b. When praying with or for someone of the opposite sex, place your hand on the head only.

   c. Knocking off a lady's hat or messing up someone's hair is unnecessary, disorderly, and uncalled for.

   d. Going all over the church building and laying hands on everybody for no reason is out of order. Purpose, reason, and cause must be behind the act of laying on of hands.

   e. When working with unbelievers or those who know nothing of this doctrine, show wisdom and consideration for them. Know that God is directing you to lay hands on them, or it could be a detriment to them.

   f. Follow guidelines established by the pastor as to who should practice the laying on of hands and when it is appropriate.

God's work is contrary to the carnal thinking of the unregenerate, but when we act according to the Word and Spirit we will see the desired results. Good manners, spiritual decorum, and the dignity of the Almighty always accompany the principles of the doctrine of Christ. May it ever be so in the laying on of hands.

God has allowed us to place our hands upon others and ask God to bless them through our prayers—what a privilege! God's people must accept both the privilege and responsibility of laying on of hands. We live in a hurting, hungry, and lonely world, starving for not only a human touch but also a divine touch. As we reach out to touch others, may we also be touched by Him.

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**LESSON 38**

**NOTES:**

# RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

## HEBREWS 6:1-2

Note: According to Hebrews 6:1-2, the resurrection of the dead is one of the six *principles of the doctrine of Christ*. Beginning in Genesis and continuing through Revelation, the resurrection of the dead is the theme and hope of humanity. Abraham, our spiritual father, had faith in God for the resurrection of Isaac had he slain him (Romans 4:17; Galatians 3:7; Hebrews 11:17-19).

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Since our subject is one of such broad spectrum involving both testaments, additional research on the subject of the resurrection is desirable. The resurrection of Jesus Christ will be a major point of this study along with other resurrections in the Scriptures.

Before you begin this study, read I Corinthians 15:1-58, along with other scriptural references to the subject at hand.

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## RESURRECTIONS IN THE SCRIPTURE

Here are instances in which God raised people from the dead:

1. Widow's son raised to life (I Kings 17:17-23)
2. The Shunamite's son raised to life (II Kings 4:8-37)
3. Moabite man placed in Elisha's tomb (II Kings 13:20-21)
4. Jarius's daughter resurrected (Mark 5:22-43)
5. Widow of Nain's son raised from the dead (Luke 7:11-15)
6. Lazarus's resurrection (John 11:1-46)
7. Tabitha (Dorcas) raised from the dead (Acts 9:36-42)
8. Eutychus resurrected (Acts 20:1-12)

"Women received their dead raised to life again" (Hebrews 11:35) probably refers to incidents 1 and 2 above. If not, then there were other resurrections not specifically recorded in the Bible.

There is a great cloud of witnesses attesting the glorious resurrection power of God. All the above examples were resurrections to corruption, or temporary resurrections, meaning that these eight people died again and are in their graves at present. None of them were raised to incorruptibility, or given a glorified body never to die again. Someday this will happen, which brings us to our next point.

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## THE BETTER RESURRECTION

"Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35). Some of those in Hebrews 11 were victims of their faith, while others were victors. The writer of Hebrews mentioned those who were tortured, not accepting deliverance in order to obtain a better resurrection. What is the better resurrection?

It is a resurrection to incorruption where the one resurrected will never face death again. Those who were raised to life in Hebrews 11:35 have since faced death again and are now in their graves awaiting the better resurrection. Being raised to incorruption never to die again is a better resurrection than being resurrected and then facing death again.

Being resurrected from the dead, although it may be only a short time until we face death again, does not in any way lessen the glory and victory over death. What a victory for one who has died to be resurrected from the dead, even if it does not parallel the better resurrection!

God's resurrecting powers have not diminished in the least; He can, and still does, raise people from the dead. They will again face death to await their time in the future resurrection. Quality is the object here rather than the event of a resurrection. David described the better resurrection as a time "when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15).

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## IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Numerous errors existed prior to and in the days of Paul concerning the resurrection. The Sadducees, a religious sect of Jesus' day, taught that there was no resurrection (Mark 12:18). Their philosophy was espoused by some in Corinth (I Corinthians 15:13). Another erroneous teaching that overthrew the faith of some was that the resurrection was already past (II Timothy 2:17-18). Paul described the dilemma of believers if there is no resurrection of the dead or if it is already past. What a tragedy and sorrow we face if either of these is true! If such teachings are true, then:

1. Christ is not risen (I Corinthians 15:13).
2. Our preaching is vain (I Corinthians 15:14).
3. Our faith is vain (I Corinthians 15:14, 17).
4. We are false witnesses of God (I Corinthians 15:15).
5. We are yet in our sins (I Corinthians 15:17).
6. Those asleep (dead) in Christ have perished (I Corinthians 15:18).
7. We sorrow as others who have no hope (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Praise God, none of the above is true! There is a resurrection of the dead, and we need to preach it and believe it so that we can be a part of it.

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## THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Before there can be a resurrection, there must be a death. Elijah's translation to heaven was not a resurrection. We must differentiate between *resurrection* and *translation*; they are two different things.

Many Bible scholars agree that the first resurrection covers the span of time from Christ's resurrection until the events of Revelation 20:5-6. It is this span of time that we want to study now.

- **Christ's Resurrection**—Christ was the first to be raised to incorruption, thus setting in motion the first resurrection. "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts 26:23). Christ was the first to be raised from the dead to die no more. The first recorded resurrection in the Scripture is that of the widow's son in I Kings 17:17-23; but this was a temporary restoration to life, and the widow's son had to face death again. Christ is alive forevermore and will never see corruption (Acts 13:34; Romans 6:9; Hebrews 7:16; Revelation 1:18). Jesus Christ is (1) the first-begotten from the dead (Revelation 1:5), (2) the first fruits of those who sleep (I Corinthians 15:20-23), and (3) the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18). Jesus Christ set in motion and established a resurrection order of which we all desire to be a part.

- **Resurrection of Old Saints**—Some saints came out of their graves at Christ's resurrection (Matthew 27:50-53). They did not actually do so until after He arose, thereby retaining the order of the first resurrection with Christ as the first fruits.

  Apparently these were Old Testament saints, and obviously all the Old Testament saints did not rise from the dead at this time, since the Scripture only says "many" (Matthew 27:52). It appears that these saints did not die again but were raised to incorruption. If so, they were caught up to heaven and are now living in the presence of God with a glorified body. God's Word is silent on many details such as this, but as we sing, "we will understand it better by and by."

- **A Spiritual Resurrection**—Some passages of Scripture speak of a spiritual resurrection here and now, rather than the physical resurrection of the future. (See John 5:24-25; Romans 6:1-11; Ephesians 2:1-6.) We were dead in trespasses and sins, but God raised (resurrected) us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (See lesson 19.)

  John 5:24-29 covers both a spiritual and physical resurrection of the dead. Verses 24 and 25 deal with those who have not died physically but who pass from spiritual death to spiritual life. Verses 28 and 29 deal specifically with those who are in their graves, which indicates physical death.

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- **Rapture of the Church**—The English word *rapture* does not appear in the Bible, but it means a catching away, and it is often used in reference to the catching away of the church at the return of Christ. (See John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:1-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.)

  At the rapture of the church, there will be a resurrection of the dead in Christ for those who died in the faith with victory over sin. This group extends from the formation of the church at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) until the rapture of the church. All who have died in Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27) will be resurrected at the catching away of the church.

  When the Rapture occurs, the dead in Christ will be resurrected and rise first, and the living saints will be caught up immediately behind them. Both groups will unite in the clouds as they meet the Lord in the air to be with Him forever (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). We await this event with great anticipation.

- **Palm Bearers**—Apparently the white-robed palm bearers in Revelation 7:9-17 are martyrs who are killed after the rapture of the church. At the opening of the fifth seal, we see the souls under the altar who were slain for the Word of God. They cry for their blood to be avenged; but for the time being, they are given white robes and told to rest a little season until their fellow servants and brethren who will be killed are slain (Revelation 6:9-11). Between Revelation 6:11 and Revelation 7:9, this slaughter of martyrs takes place. During this time known as the great tribulation, the Beast (Antichrist), in unity with the mother of harlots, will kill those who stand for the Word of God (Revelation 6:9). Since the church will already be raptured at this time, apparently these are honest-hearted people who never heard the truth before but who then take a stand for God's Word and lose their life as a result.

  During this horrible time of tribulation, God will resurrect them from the dead to stand before His throne (Revelation 7:15). In the chronology of events, others will be killed following the resurrection of the white-robed palm bearers.

- **Two Witnesses**—It seems that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are Moses and Elijah, sent to the earth during the Tribulation to prophesy for 1,260 days. Miraculous God-given powers will be manifested as these men exercise their ministry while on earth. After these days are accomplished, the Beast out of the bottomless pit will overcome them and kill them. For three and a half days their bodies will lie in the street, while the entire world beholds them, sends gifts to one another, and rejoices over their death. With satellite TV in our modern age, this can easily be accomplished, with the world viewing, if not their death, their bodies immediately after death. After this, they will be resurrected from the dead and caught up to heaven while their enemies behold them (Revelation 11:1-11).

- **The Beheaded**—After the two witnesses are resurrected, we see the Antichrist in his greatest fury. The false prophet, also called a beast, will cause an image to be made of the Beast (Revelation 13:10-15; 19:20). This false

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prophet will have power to give life to the image, and all who do not worship this image will be killed (Revelation 13:11-18). Revelation 14:13 mentions others who die during this time. No doubt these will be beheaded for the Word of God, for refusing to worship the Beast or his image, and for refusing his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands (Revelation 20:4).

Prior to the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth (the Millennium), those who have been beheaded will be resurrected from the dead to reign with Christ on earth. When this group is resurrected, the Bible declares that "this is the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:5).

We should also note that 144,000 Jews will be sealed during the Tribulation, according to Revelation 7:1-8. Revelation 12:1-5 speaks of a male child being caught up to heaven. Some interpret the child as the 144,000, while others say the child is Christ. In either case, although the 144,000 will be caught up to the throne of God, they will *not* be part of the first resurrection (Revelation 14:1-5). There is no indication that any of the 144,000 will die. They will experience a *translation,* not a *resurrection*.

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## THE RESURRECTED BODY

Questions entered the minds of the Corinthians, just as they do ours, concerning the resurrection. One of these was, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" (I Corinthians 15:35). The Bible does not discuss every detail, but it does give us some interesting insight on the resurrected body.

1. Paul compared death and resurrection to the planting of seeds (I Corinthians 15:35-38).

2. Paul compared celestial or heavenly bodies to terrestrial or earthly bodies, in teaching about the resurrection body (I Corinthians 15:39-41).

3. Paul compared how we are sown (buried) to how we are raised (resurrected) (I Corinthians 15:42-44):

   a. Sown in corruption—raised in incorruption.
   b. Sown in dishonor—raised in glory.
   c. Sown in weakness—raised in power.
   d. Sown in a natural body—raised a spiritual body.

4. Jesus, in a glorified body, appeared through closed doors to His disciples (John 20:19-23; Luke 24:36-39).

5. John said that when we are resurrected we shall be like Him (I John 3:1-3).

6. Our vile bodies will be fashioned like His glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21).

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7. We will bear the image of the heavenly at our resurrection (I Corinthians 15:45-49).

8. We will be like the angels of heaven, in that we will never die (Mark 12:18-27).

9. The resurrection is called the redemption of the human body (Romans 8:23-25).

10. Putting on the tabernacle not made with hands will occur at the resurrection (II Corinthians 5:1-8).

Study I Corinthians 15:1-58, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, and Revelation 21:1-7 for further information on our glorified bodies and eternal existence.

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## THE SECOND RESURRECTION

The second resurrection is separated from the first resurrection by the millennial reign of Christ on this earth. It will include the wicked of every generation from Adam until this resurrection occurs. The vast majority of those in this resurrection are sinful, with the exception of some whose names appear in the Book of Life. Those who will be saved at this time are the ones saved during the Millennium or in the short season following.

The second resurrection is the final resurrection for any and all the dead of every generation who were not in the first resurrection. Daniel and Jesus both mentioned this resurrection (Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:28-29).

We who are alive today must make every effort to be in the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6). Any who have a chance to hear and obey the truth in the day of grace, and do not, will be lost (II Thessalonians 2:1-12). Backsliders and those who reject the truth will believe a lie and be damned if they are not in the rapture of the church. Today is the day of salvation; after the Rapture, those who reject truth will receive no second chance.

The resurrection of both saved and lost is one of the cardinal truths of God's Word. It is a principle of Christ's doctrine as well as a foundation stone of the church. Should we not study, research, and dig into this precious mine of truth, as we strive to be in the first resurrection? Let us purpose in our hearts to be in that grand reunion in the sky when Jesus returns.

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## NOTES

**LESSON 39**

**NOTES:**

# ETERNAL JUDGMENT

## HEBREWS 6:1-2

Note: According to Hebrews 6:1-2, eternal judgment is one of the six *principles of the doctrine of Christ*. Judgment, a term used extensively throughout the Bible, has many connotations. Addressing each of these areas would be too vast for this study; we will only cover major points here.

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Eternal judgment is another foundation stone or principle of the doctrine of Christ. We must establish these principles in our lives before we go on. Once they are established, we are equipped to forge ahead into other frontiers of God's Word.

Eternal judgment, not just the general subject of judgment, will be the basis of this study. All judgments are not eternal; some relate to specific eras of time and special matters, both temporal and spiritual. Humans, of necessity, must scripturally judge various matters in this life. Eternal judgment, the final say, the conclusion of the matter, is solely in the hands of God. Some things we can only trust to that day when God settles the debates of humanity. We have the keys to the kingdom, but only He has the keys of death and hell.

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## THE CERTAINTY OF THE JUDGMENT

People must face God in a time of judgment, a fact conclusively established in the Scriptures.

1. God will bring every work to judgment (Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; 12:13-14).

2. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

3. The Bible is clear on who will judge us: (a) God the Judge of all (Hebrews 12:23). (b) The Lord is our Judge (Isaiah 33:22; Jude 14-15). (c) A day is appointed in which He will judge the world by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31; 10:42; Romans 2:16). (d) All judgment is given to Jesus Christ (John 5:22).

Jesus Christ, the one true God manifested in the flesh, will sit upon the throne of judgment as the Judge of all humanity. His Word, the Bible, will be the book by which we will be judged, with every individual of every generation and age standing before Him.

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## JUDGMENTS IN THE SCRIPTURE

Various concepts and interpretations exist concerning the judgments in the Scripture. Several of these areas are open for discussion but should be addressed in our study. Although this is not the major point of this study, let us briefly mention some of the judgments in the Bible other than eternal judgment.

1. Some commentators identify a specific judgment for the nation of Israel. While the Bible mentions past, present, and future judgments concerning Israel, they will be judged by the same rule of measurement as all others when it comes to eternal judgment.

2. Christ's work at Calvary was a judgment for and against sin.

3. God's Word itself is often referred to as judgments (Psalm 119:7, 13, 160, 164).

4. The twelve apostles of the Lamb will sit upon twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel during the millennial reign of Christ (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30).

5. Self-judgment, or judging ourselves in this life, is an important responsibility that each of us should study and understand. Here we send our sins ahead so they will not follow us to the judgment to condemn us there (I Timothy 5:24-25). We accomplish this initially when we are born again (John 3:1-8), at which time we are washed in the blood of Christ (I Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5). By a continued life of faith and repentance, we continue to be cleansed by the blood, sending our sins on ahead (I John 1:7). There is no White Throne judgment for those who do this, just as the woman of Samaria faced her sins in this life and dealt with them. If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged (I Corinthians 11:31).

6. Judgment of things pertaining to this life is an important area of judgment (I Corinthians 6:1-8). As problems arise among ourselves, we must exercise judgment in matters pertaining to this life rather than going before the law. Brethren are not to engage attorneys and go to court against their brethren when personal feelings, disputes, and differences are involved. This does not preclude us from using attorneys in legal matters; it means that the church should handle personal disputes among believers.

We often hear we are not supposed to judge lest we be judged, but those who say this often take Scripture out of context. In Matthew 7:1, Jesus made this statement. In the context of Matthew 7:1-5, you find that Jesus taught us not to be judgmental of another when we ourselves have a beam (plank) in our eye but our brother only has a mote (small particle of sawdust) in his eye. Doing so will bring His judgment, condemnation, and damnation upon us. Yet this does not prohibit or forbid us to judge things within the bounds of the Scripture. Sin can be judged as sin, wrong as wrong, and right as right without violating God's Word.

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While rendering judgment in things pertaining to this life, we must follow these guidelines:

1. We are not to accept the person of the wicked to overthrow the righteous in judgment (Proverbs 18:5).

2. We are not to show partiality in judgment (Proverbs 24:23).

3. Judgment begins at the house of God. From the time of salvation we come under the judgment and authority of the church and God's Word (I Peter 4:17).

4. We are not to judge by appearance only but use righteous judgment (John 7:24).

5. Balancing our decisions should be a realization that we will receive reciprocating judgment (Matthew 7:2).

6. We will have judgment without mercy if we do not show mercy (James 2:12-13; Matthew 5:7).

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## ETERNAL JUDGMENT

Jesus taught the doctrine of eternal judgment so explicitly that there should be no misunderstanding what He meant. Every individual of every generation and age will ultimately face God in a time of judgment.

Scripture indicates that there are gradations and degrees in judgment, based upon knowledge, ability, and era of time that a person lived, for both the saved and lost. (See Luke 12:47-48; Romans 2:12-16; II John 8.)

The purpose of eternal judgment is not to determine whether we are saved or lost—that is fixed the moment we die. At death the spirit returns to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7), for disposition either to hell or paradise. There the souls of humans will wait in a temporary state of bliss or punishment until the resurrection day. If we are saved, we will come forth from paradise and be a part of the first resurrection. If we are lost, we will have part in the second resurrection. We will come forth to be judged according to our deeds and to receive a full reward. Judgment day will be the revelation and proclamation of the secrets of the hearts of people as they stand before God (Romans 2:16; I Corinthians 4:5; Revelation 20:11-15).

At this point, we need to examine two important segments of eternal judgment:

- **Judgment Seat of Christ**—Only believers will be judged in this judgment, with unbelievers being judged at a different time in a different judgment. The judgment seat of Christ is not to determine whether we are saved or lost, but to determine the extent of our eternal reward. When we go in the Rapture, we

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will ever be with the Lord, so there is no chance of the raptured ones ever being separated from Christ (I Thessalonians 4:17). Several important passages need close scrutiny at this juncture:

1. II Corinthians 5:1-10
2. II Timothy 4:1
3. Romans 2:6
4. I John 4:10-21
5. Romans 14:10-12
6. I Peter 1:15-19
7. I Corinthians 3:10-15
8. II John 8

*Judgment seat* comes from the Greek word *bema,* meaning a step, rostrum, throne, or tribunal. After the rapture of the church, there is a judgment of believers at the judgment seat of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Judge, and He will determine rewards, as the foregoing passages of Scripture discuss. We will discuss points 4 and 7.

1. Perfect love casts out fear (I John 4:18). We should note that the verse does not say "all fear." We can have perfect (complete or mature) love in our hearts and lives and still have many fears in this life, such as the fear of war, accidents, disease, and so on. The passage speaks particularly about a fear of the judgment seat of Christ. When we have love in our hearts, we will not be tormented by the fear of facing God, because we know all is well and we look forward to our reward.

2. Paul warned the saints about how they build on the foundation Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:10-15). Fire will try every person's work, as to what sort (kind, quality, manner, and type) it is. We can build with two types of building material: one is combustible, the other incombustible. The believer can use six kinds or grades of building material to build upon this foundation: gold, silver, or precious stones (incombustible material), or wood, hay, or stubble (combustible material). In *Laying the Foundation,* James Lee Beall made some interesting comments on these materials:

   > How will Christ discriminate between works worthy of reward and works to be burned at the Judgment Seat? The works which result from our living union with Christ through the Holy Spirit will be rewarded. These will be easy to recognize because they will bear His likeness. These are the works God always purposed to result from our relationship to Him. They are of three kinds: gold, silver, and precious stones.

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a. **Gold**—is something that has been tried and approved through waiting in faith. We "buy" gold when we come to know God through experience in trials of faith and patience. Gold speaks of the character we develop through meeting God in the furnace of affliction. (See Job 23:10; Proverbs 17:3; James 1:2-4; I Peter 1:7; Revelation 3:18.)

b. **Silver**—is the purification of motive and character that results from God's refining. As the promise of God is put to the test, our character is developed in trust, dependence upon God, and purity of motive. The dross of selfishness is removed. (See Psalm 66:10; Malachi 3:3; Zechariah 13:9.)

c. **Precious Stones**—are the values established within us through choices made under pressure. Our character is formed as we encounter afflictions and the grace of God helps us respond to them on the basis of His priorities. Precious stones are those things we hold most dear. Our heart is where our treasure is. (See Isaiah 54:11-14; Jeremiah 15:19; Malachi 3:16-18; Revelation 21:19-21.)

In contrast, the works to be burned are those that did not become fireproof during this life. They are the products of self-effort instead of dependency on His indwelling Spirit of life. Because they are not the fruit of our union with Christ, they are devoid of His life and are dead works. These are of three kinds: wood, hay and stubble.

a. **Wood**—is the work of our own hands or the result of our natural talent unaided by the Holy Spirit. Those who are talented are often tempted to idolize their own creativity, ingenuity, and skill. These things are good, but they are not of lasting value. They can become occasions for idolatry. (See Deuteronomy 4:28; II Kings 19:18; Daniel 5:4, 23; Ezekiel 15:4; Romans 1:25.)

b. **Hay**—(or grass) is something we do to impress others by appearance, personality, or status. We can make people think we are more than we are, but God sees the heart. Popularity is short-lived. Reality soon catches up with us, and our outward appeal soon withers. (See Psalm 103:15-16; Isaiah 40:6-8; James 1:10-11; I Peter 1:24.)

c. **Stubble**—is the nonessential in our lives that we should prune away to make for greater fruitfulness. In the natural, stubble is the short-standing straw left behind after reaping. At harvesttime it is burned. (See Job 21:18; Isaiah 5:21-24; 33:11-12; Obadiah 17-18; Malachi 4:1; John 15:1-6.)

At the judgment seat of Christ, a person's works of wood, hay, and stubble are destroyed, while the individual is saved. We must keep in mind that children of God receive a reward based on the *sort* of works they have done (I Corinthians 3:13) and *how* they have built (I Corinthians 3:10). All these

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people at this judgment are saved, but all rewards are not the same. John admonished, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (II John 8).

- **White Throne Judgment**—We now come to the final part of the eternal judgment of God (I Corinthians 6:1-8; Revelation 20:11-15).

  1. All who appear here are resurrected in the second resurrection, which is separated from the first resurrection by one thousand years (Revelation 20:5-6).

  2. No wicked persons will have been resurrected before this time; therefore, the lost of every generation will appear at this judgment.

  3. Some who have been saved after the first resurrection during the Millennium, and whose names are in the Book of Life, will receive a just reward, just as other saints did at the judgment seat of Christ (Revelation 20:15).

  4. Judgment will be based on each person's deeds and the truth revealed to them in their era (Romans 2:11-15). Cain lived before the law of Moses, and Nebuchadnezzar lived before the church age—each will be judged accordingly. God will be equitable and just with respect to every era of time.

  5. Saints are to judge the world (I Corinthians 6:2); they will sit with Christ as He judges the world.

  6. Saints will judge angels also (I Corinthians 6:3). Fallen angels reserved unto this day will face judgment (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

  7. Death and hell with its inhabitants are cast into the lake of fire after the White Throne judgment; this is the second death (Revelation 20:14). The lake of fire is the final and eternal abode of the lost of every generation. No doubt the judgment of Matthew 25:31-46 is connected to these times, as we see the goats on the left going away into everlasting fire.

## DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATION OF THE WICKED

Annihilation of the wicked is an erroneous doctrine that originated in the second and third century and is still taught by some today. According to proponents of this teaching, wicked persons will be consumed body, soul, and spirit, and cease to exist.

Such teaching constitutes conditional immortality, that is, our immortality depends upon whether we are saved or lost. According to this view, saved people will be immortal, living in eternal bliss; unsaved people are mortal, have a limited existence, and will cease to exist at the close of the determined punishment. Conditional immortality is

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unscriptural; we are immortal, regardless of whether we are saved or lost.

Some attribute this doctrine to Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, or other early church writers, but the teachings of these men on eternal punishment is too clear for this to be laid to their charge. Arnobius, who wrote a seven-book apology for Christianity between A.D. 296 and 303, said, concerning man's free will and his ignorance of sin, "The soul outlives the body, but depends solely on God for the gift of eternal duration. The wicked go into the fire of *Gehenna*, and will ultimately be consumed or annihilated."[1]

The following verses of Scripture show that Arnobius and others who teach this doctrine are in error. Jesus Himself taught eternal judgment.

1. Vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7).
2. Everlasting fire for the goats on the left (Matthew 25:41-46).
3. Punishment with everlasting destruction (II Thessalonians 1:7-10).
4. Resurrection to damnation (John 5:29).
5. Everlasting fire (Matthew 18:8).
6. Resurrection to everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2).
7. Eternal damnation for blasphemers (Mark 3:29).

Annihilation is a deceptive, unscriptural doctrine that should be avoided by those who believe God's Word. Let us settle once and for all from the Word of the Lord: we are immortal creatures destined to enter the eternal joy of heaven or the eternal suffering of the lake of fire.

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A day of accounting before almighty God awaits the living and the dead. We who are alive can decide what that day will be like; the departed have had their opportunities and will be judged accordingly.

What will that day hold for you? Only you can decide! If you are lost, turn to a loving and merciful God who is not willing that any perish but that all come to repentance. Let Him save your soul while there is yet time.

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## ENDNOTE

[1]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1910) 2:859-60.

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## NOTES

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**LESSON 40**

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# PERFECTION

## HEBREWS 6:1-2

We have studied all six of the *principles of the doctrine of Christ* in Hebrews 6:1-2. They are repentance from dead works, faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Now the challenge is for us to go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1). Some include perfection as a part of the principles of the doctrine; others do not. Whatever one's position, it is important to study the subject of perfection.

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## DEFINITION

Several Greek and Hebrew words are translated into our English word *perfection*. For the sake of fairness, we here present every background word relating to perfection in the Scripture. We will not choose an isolated word, or one with an unclear meaning, to base our teaching on. Any Hebrew or Greek lexicon will give the same basic definitions presented here.

- **Hebrew Words**—*(Old Testament)*

  1. **Tamiym**—means entire, having integrity, true, without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincere, sound, without spot, undefiled, upright, and whole.

  2. **Shalem**—means complete, friendly, full, just, made ready, peaceable, perfect, quiet, and whole.

  3. **Tam**—means complete, pious, gentle, dear, coupled together, perfect, plain, undefiled, and upright.

  4. **Tummiym**—means perfection and *thummim*, represents the whole truth. This word is used for the Urim and Thummim of the high priest's garment.

  5. **Miklah**—means perfection and completion.

  6. **Kaliyl**—means complete, whole, specifically of a sacrifice entirely consumed, full, all, every whit, perfect, utter, whole burnt offering, and wholly.

- **Greek Words**—*(New Testament)*

  1. **Teleios**—means complete, of full age, perfect.

  2. **Teleiotes**—means completeness and perfection.

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3. **Teleioo**—means to complete, accomplish, consummate, consecrate, finish, fulfill, and perfect.

4. **Teleilosis**—means completion, verification, absolution, perfection, and performance.

5. **Telesphoreo**—means to bear to completion (maturity), ripen fruit, bring fruit to perfection.

6. **Akribeia**—means exact, perfect manner, and exactly.

7. **Katartizo**—means to complete thoroughly, repair, adjust, frame, mend, restore, prepare, completely furnish, and thoroughly equip.

8. **Holokleria**—means physical wholeness, perfect soundness, completeness in every part, and entirety.

9. **Artios**—means fresh, complete, and perfect.

10. **Diasozo**—means to cure, preserve, rescue, bring safely, heal, and make perfectly whole.

The meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words are essentially the same, varying only as they apply to certain things or situations. The biblical usage of the word *perfection* is quite different from the English definition, which Webster defines as complete in all respects, without defect or omission, sound, and flawless; in a condition of complete excellence, as in skill or quality, faultless, and most excellent.

"Nobody is perfect!" and "No one has ever been perfect except Jesus Christ!" are worn cliches in our language. According to Webster's definition of perfection, this is true, but the Bible does not use Webster's modern definition when it speaks of perfection. Therefore, this study is based on the original language definitions, rather than on Webster's. We should not be intimidated by these remarks from those who do not understand the Scripture. Perfection is a biblical doctrine and is attainable in God's sight while we live on this earth.

We should keep two things in mind while studying perfection: (1) God is perfect in every sense of the word. He is without flaw, lacks nothing, is immutable, is sinless, cannot be tempted, and knows all things. While we know only in part (I Corinthians 13:9), God knows all things. For further study of the perfection of God, see Deuteronomy 32:4; II Samuel 22:31; Job 36:4; 37:16; Matthew 5:48. (2) God's Word is perfect in every aspect. It needs no additions, deletions, or corrections; it only needs to be studied, heard, preached, and obeyed (Psalm 19:7; James 1:25; Revelation 22:18-19).

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## PERFECTION TAUGHT

God demanded outward physical perfection of the Levites in the Old Testament priesthood. Today He requires inward spiritual perfection of the New Testament priesthood of believers (I Peter 2:9).

The Scriptures challenge us to become a complete, entire, adjusted, mature person in Christ Jesus. God's Word instructs us to refrain from sinning, yet we are not doomed if we fail; we have an advocate with the Father (I John 2:1-2). Since God knew we would fail, in reference to us perfection does not mean a faultless, sinless individual who has never, or will never, fail God. When true saints of God fail (and they constantly strive not to fail), they are quick to go to God in repentance or to their fellowman if they have wronged him. Saints who repent, endeavor to keep God's Word, strive to be better saints, and follow after peace with all people and holiness, are mature in the eyes of God.

God's will for our lives is perfection, which is simply maturity, being grown up, or complete in Christ. Those who fail to grow up, correct mistakes, and walk humbly in obedience to the Word of the Lord are babes, carnal, and unskillful in the Word (I Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14). For too long we have viewed perfection as an unattainable goal in this life. It is time to arise and move toward this biblical destination in Christ. In the eyes of people, we will not be perfect; but before God we can be complete, entire, and lacking nothing. Failures may come, but we can rise above them because we are grown up in Christ.

God's Word teaches us that there is something to "go on unto" (Hebrews 6:1). Scripturally we are perfectible.

1. We are to take note of the perfect person (Psalm 37:37; 64:1-4).

2. With regard to love, we are to be perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48). (Love is the subject in this context.)

3. God gives us the fivefold ministry for the perfecting of the saints (Ephesians 4:11-13).

4. God gives His Word to perfect and thoroughly furnish us (II Timothy 3:16-17).

5. Control of the tongue is part of perfection (James 3:2).

6. Striving for perfection should be a constant goal (Philippians 3:10-17).

7. The Bible admonishes us to attain perfection and explains what can help us do so. (See II Corinthians 13:9; Colossians 1:28; 4:12; Hebrews 2:10; James 1:4; I Peter 5:10.)

Using Webster's definition, we will never achieve perfection in the eyes of people. But

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we need to quit worrying about what Webster said and go on to maturity and completion in Christ.

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## PERFECTION REQUIRED

God's Word points out several areas of our lives that need perfecting. We desperately need development and maturity in the following four areas. The Scripture presents other areas also, but let us investigate the basics.

- **Faith and Works**—God has so joined these two entities together that one without the other is incomplete. We will present them separately to show the importance of each, but ultimately both must be present and joined in unison for us to accomplish anything worthwhile. Both are important and essential elements in our lives.

  1. **Faith**—Hebrews 11:1 gives us the definition of faith. After we are saved, we are to develop our faith in God to a point of perfection or maturity. As an example, we note the desperate cry of a man who fought unbelief (Mark 9:14-29).

     a. Paul wanted to help the Thessalonian saints to perfect what was lacking in their faith (I Thessalonians 3:10).

     b. We are to ask God in faith, nothing wavering (James 1:5-6).

     c. We are to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (Hebrews 10:23).

     d. Works perfected Abraham's faith; faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26).

  God wants our faith in Him to be mature to the point that we can trust Him regardless of what He does. Whether we understand or not, we will trust Him and work for Him.

  2. **Works**—God expects us to put hands and feet to our prayers and faith in Him. Works are the spirit or life of faith (James 2:26). Without works our faith, being alone, is dead.

     a. Abraham's faith was perfected by his works (James 2:22).

     b. God wants to make us perfect in every good work to do His will (Hebrews 13:20-21).

     c. The rich young ruler had done many good things, but he was still imperfect in what God wanted (Matthew 19:21).

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d. Sardis's works were not perfect before God (Revelation 3:2).

For further study, do a comparative study of Romans 4, Galatians 3, and James 2, noting the correlation between faith and works.

- **Heart**—We note several Old Testament and New Testament characters with reference to God's expectations concerning the heart. Half-hearted Christians have a short tenure in the work of God; Satan attacks their divided heart and consecration, and they ultimately separate themselves from the love of God.

  1. Solomon exhorted Israel to let their heart be perfect before God (I Kings 8:61). Foreign women turned Solomon away from God because his heart was not perfect with the Lord (I Kings 11:4). David had warned Solomon to serve the Lord with a perfect heart (I Chronicles 28:9).

  2. Abijam, king of Judah, did not have a perfect heart before God (I Kings 15:1-3).

  3. Hezekiah is worthy of study regarding a perfect heart before God (II Kings 20:1-7; II Chronicles 32:24-31).

  4. Amaziah, king of Judah, lacked a perfect heart (II Chronicles 25:1-2).

  5. God shows Himself strong to those whose hearts are perfect (II Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 101:1-3).

  6. We are to love God with all our heart (Deuteronomy 6:5; Luke 10:27).

  7. We need to guard the heart from things that could defile us (Mark 7:20-23).

  8. The early church served God with one heart, or singleness of heart (Acts 2:42-47; 4:31-37).

  9. The hearts of Ananias and Sapphira were not right with God (Acts 5:1-11).

  Inward maturity, undivided hearts, and single eyes are sorely needed in our lives (Matthew 6:22-23). Reuben was condemned for having a divided heart (Judges 5:15); how can we expect anything less? Where our treasures are, there will our heart be also. May God help us to keep our heart with all diligence. Let us ask Him to search it and perfect it in His sight.

- **Fruit Bearing**—God wants us to be fruit-bearing Christians (see lesson 33), eliminating anything from our lives that would hinder or destroy spiritual fruit.

  1. Seed that fell among thorns brought forth no fruit to perfection (Luke 8:4-15). The thorns are: (a) the cares of this world, (b) the deceitfulness of riches, (c) the pleasures of this life, and (d) the lusts of other things. We

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cannot attain perfection in fruit bearing if we allow any of these thorns to grow; eventually they choke the Word.

2. Jesus taught the importance of bearing fruit and how to accomplish it (John 15:1-8).

3. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit should be the quest of every Christian (Galatians 5:19-23).

4. We must add seven things to our faith if we are to be fruitful (II Peter 1:4-10).

Fruit-bearing Christians are the result of perfection—maturity, completeness, and being grown up in Christ.

- **Love**—We have achieved perfection in love when we can love our enemies and speak to everyone—especially those who are not of our profession, faith, race, and so on—with love. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves and love the brethren with an unfeigned love.

1. Jesus commanded us to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:43-48).

2. Keeping God's Word demonstrates perfect love (I John 2:4-5).

3. Loving one another shows perfection in love (I John 4:11-21).

4. Charity (love) is the bond of perfection (Colossians 3:14).

Hatred, strife, and bitterness have no place in the heart and life of the child of God. Prejudice, partiality, and biases leave when God's love is perfected in our lives. May God help us to mature to the point that we can love more than our family and close friends, but see a hungry, hurting, lonely world and love them as He loved them.

## PERFECTION ACHIEVED

Perfection is attainable, or God would have never have called us to go on to perfection. "Conversion is the miracle of a moment; the making of a saint is the work of a lifetime." Our goal should be to grow from babes to adults, because milk belongs to babes, while meat belongs to "them that are of full age" (Hebrews 5:12-14).

When babies are born they have all the members of the human body, but these members are a long way from maturity. Men and women are born into the kingdom of God with each element required to reach perfection. With God's Word, the Holy Ghost, and the ministry, they can achieve perfection, or maturity.

1. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation (Genesis 6:8-9).

2. God asked Abraham to walk before Him and to be perfect (Genesis 17:1).

3. Job was a perfect and upright man (Job 1:1-8; 2:3, 8:20; 9:19-22).

Surely, with the help of the Holy Ghost in this age of grace, we can grow up, be mature, and reach perfection if these Old Testament men could. We must never stop but go on as Hebrews 6:1 challenges us. We are better than we were, but we are not all we can be. Let us unwrap our talent, use our skills, and develop our lives to their fullest potential in the kingdom of God.

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My feelings toward my life, my family, my friends, my church, and my God are best summed up in the words of this little poem, whose author is unknown to me.

When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon radiant sun,
When I stand with Christ on high,
Looking o'er life's history,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

God's best to you,

Crawford D. Coon

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CRAWFORD D. COON has been actively engaged in the study of God's Word since entering the ministry at age sixteen. In the ensuing years, he has spent all but six in the full-time pastorate, serving in Louisiana, Arkansas, Iowa, and Indiana. While pastoring in Indiana, he served as a member of the Indiana District Board. Returning to his hometown of Jena, Louisiana, he became pastor of the First United Pentecostal Church.

On many occasions, he has taught in conferences, youth camps, camp meetings, and seminars. Studies have taken him to Arkansas University at Monticello and Louisiana State University at Alexandria. He received clinical pastoral training at Louisiana State Hospital, Pineville, Louisiana, through New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana. He has a bachelor's degree in theology and is working to complete a master's degree. He has written for various publications and served the United Pentecostal Church International in various capacities.

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